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Inside
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Welcome...
to a world of colour



Have your eyes adjusted yet? Take a breath. Relax. This issue we explore the world of manga-style art in all its colourful glory, starting with DCWJ's amazing cover art and workshop over on page 68. The in-demand artist reveals how he composes and creates his dynamic imagery.

The manga theme continues through the issue, too. On page 76 Doo uses masks to paint the smooth, clean art associated with the Japanese comic art form. Then turn to page 36 to see our Artist Q&A section get a manga facelift as professional artists from manga and illustration reveal how to paint everything from Chibi figures to Gundam girls and Visual-kei style character art.

2000 AD's PJ Holden shares his knowledge of drawing comic panels using Manga Studio on page 80. He also wrote an original script for his workshop. Plus, on page 100 Sunil Pant dips into SketchUp to create an Akira-inspired sci-fi motorbike.

We can't have a manga issue without turning our attention to mech design. On page 44 we ask leading mech designers from Hollywood, illustration and comics for their ideas of what makes an amazing mech, and reveal how Japan's manga artists have influenced the rise of mech art in western films and illustration.

Finally, I'd like to welcome all our new readers who have joined us since the start of the year. Keep reading and don't hesitate to write in and let me know what you think of the magazine!

Ian

Ian Dean, Editor
ian.dean@futurenet.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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Featured artists

ImagineFX brings together some of the world's finest artists to share their techniques and inspiration for creating stunning artwork



Simone Bianchi



Simone is one of the most creative artists working in comics today. He began his career in Italy before drawing for DC on Green Lantern. Now he creates art exclusively for Marvel, having worked on Astonishing X-Men with Warren Ellis, and all the major characters, including Wolverine, Spider-Man and Fantastic Four. We interview Simone on page 60 and discover what makes him tick.

www.simonebianchi.com

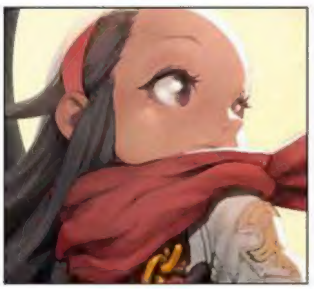


Steven Tung



Steven lives in Taiwan and studies at the National Yunlin University of Science and Technology. He also freelances for various clients using digital and traditional painting techniques. This issue we spotlight Steven's painting, New Life, which is part of a series the artist is working on. Discover how he brings his unique robotic character to life on page 74.

www.steventung.cghub.com



Doo



Choi Won-Chun, aka Doo, is a concept artist as well as an art illustrator who was in charge of character illustrations for Dragon Nest at Eyedentity Games before going freelance. While his personal style is more textured, Doo excels at manga characters. Turn to page 76 to read how the artist uses masks to create clean lines when paint his elegant moonlight assassin.

www.doo-c.com

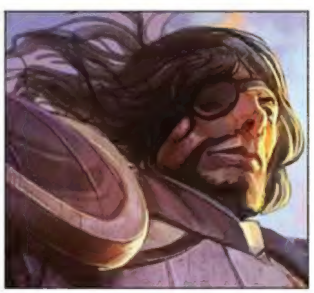


PJ Holden



Based in Northern Ireland, PJ is a regular artist for 2000 AD, having drawn Judge Dredd, Rogue Trooper, Samizdat Squadron and many other strips over the years. He's also worked with Garth Ennis, Mark Sable and Rob Williams and has created his own comic series, Fearless. This issue PJ reveals how to draw comic panels, using his own script. Turn to page 80 to read his workshop.

www.pauljholden.com



Brolo



Brolo, real name Eduardo Bromhnley, lives in Chile and describes illustration as his job and his first love. The artist has drawn manga-style comics for Capcom and UDON, including the very successful Street Fighter and Mega Man series. He also creates character designs for trading cards. You can find Brolo's workshop on page 86 where he reveals how to paint a manga-style male hero.

www.llamastudio.cl/brolo



Don Seegmiller



Leading character and creature designer Don is a dab hand at getting the most from his art software. Traditionally trained, Don fell in love with digital art and has become a key user and trainer in Corel Painter. This issue Don flexes his art muscles and combines both his favoured Painter and Photoshop, revealing how to get the most from each software. Read Don's detailed workshop on page 92.

www.seegmillerart.com



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

Cover artist

DCWJ has been wowing online fans for years with his eccentric manga-style character illustrations. Now he does it on ImagineFX's cover

© Appeboot Inc



DCWJ

COUNTRY: Singapore
SOFTWARE: Photoshop
WEB: www.dcwj.cghub.com

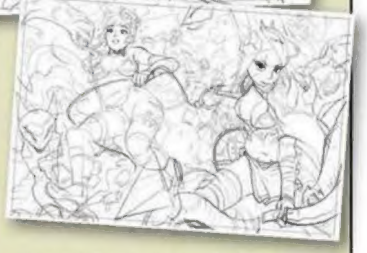
DCWJ, also known as Derrick Chew, has been in love with anime, manga and fantasy heroes for as long as he can remember. This imaginative artist dips into every colour under the rainbow, and some that aren't, for our cover illustration. He says he hopes one day people can enjoy his art as much as he enjoys painting it. We might be there already.



In progress

How DCWJ's ninjas leapt onto our cover





The aim is for an action-packed cover image that exudes character. We're clear from the outset we want a wraparound cover, so DCWJ sends over his first ninjas in flight idea. It's great, but we request some slight changes to the heroines and the scene – such as adding more clothes!



Now that the scene is set and we're happy that the image won't offend, DCWJ begins his first colour stage. This is vital for the cover design, because we're able to begin planning the colours and the rest of the design to fit in with, and enhance, the artist's painting. Once that's all agreed, DCWJ starts to add lighting and detail.



We place the final art on the cover and begin working up the design. Some complex areas of the image make text hard to read and they need tweaking. You can read the full workshop and discover all of DCWJ's techniques on page 68.

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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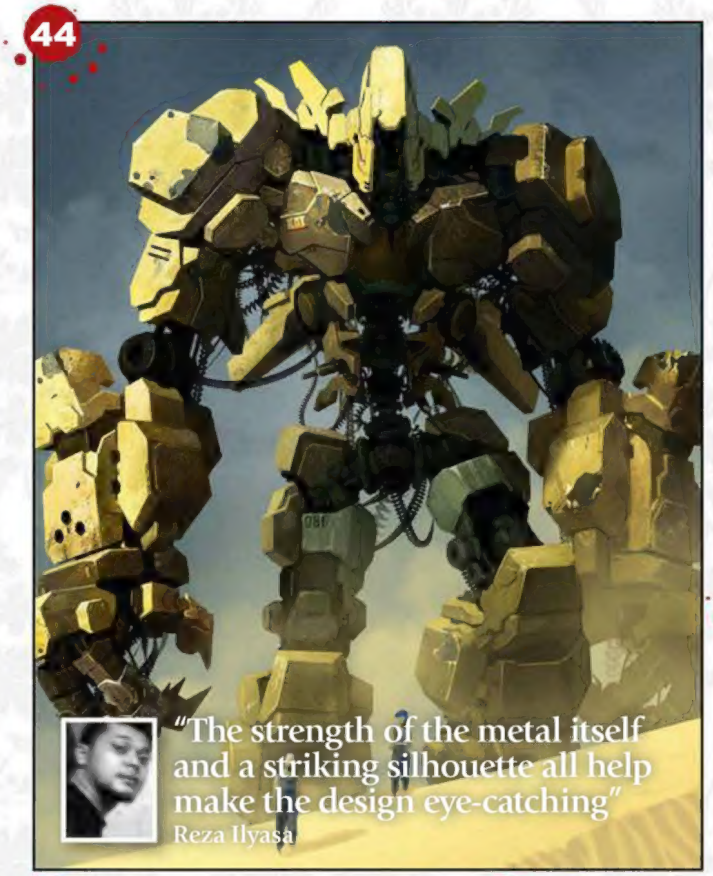
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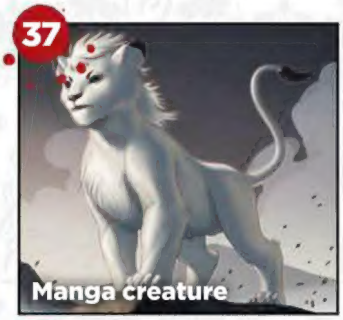
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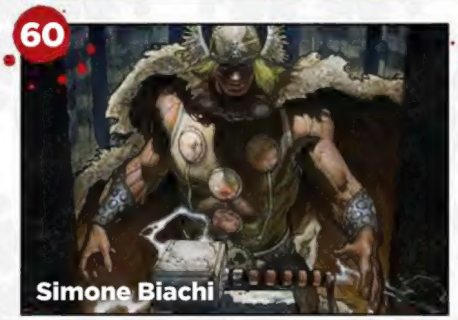


Reader FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art















ImagineFX Workshops

Advice and techniques from pro artists...



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DCWJ paints ninjas, zombies and giant snakes.



74 Add emotion to your robot art
Steven Tung brings a machine to life.



76 Master manga's masking methods
Doo uses clean lines and masking techniques.



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PJ Holden creates a comic with Manga Studio.



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Make more of Paint Tool SAI, with Paco Rico Torres.



86 Bring a cool character to life
Brolo on how to make art dynamic and expressive.



92 Work with two art programs
Don Seegmiller combines Painter and Photoshop.



100 Design a bike for a manga setting
Sunil Pant explores 3D sketching techniques.

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36 How to paint watercolour manga, multiple character scenes, a manga monster, Visual-kei aesthetic, a Gundam girl and much more!





Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Tanya Varga
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



A graduate of San Francisco's Academy of Art University's illustration course, Tanya trained in traditional mediums before teaching herself how to work digitally – a process that required "a lot of time, patience, experimentation and practice." Her academic and self-taught background is evident in her dreamy, ethereal work, which mixes a strong understanding of colour with photorealistic techniques.

"Although I strive to create beautiful characters that are aesthetically pleasing, I like to add bits of obscurity and weirdness to them, which makes the characters a lot more interesting," says Tanya. She works as a freelance illustrator and graphic artist, and is busy putting together a book of personal art.



1 ALLURE "For this painting, I wanted to create an alluring nymph or faerie-like creature that looked like she could be either good or evil, and leave it to the viewer to decide."

2 IN FULL BLOOM "I always want the viewer to feel as if they could almost smell, taste and touch my artwork. This was the thinking behind this mysterious image that stimulates the senses."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Tanya – you've won yourself a copy of Exposé 10 and d'artiste: Character Design! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Game character designer Sze Jones thinks that In Full Bloom is a timeless piece of fantasy art…



"Tanya's made a daring choice of eye colour for In Full Bloom. It's refreshing and goes with the pollen and glows on the cheeks. It brings light and life to the entire piece."

Garret Arney-Johnson
LOCATION: US
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



For Californian-based artist Garret, the prospect of a career founded on his passion for the arts wasn't always an option. "I used to work in the culinary sector, but I just wasn't satisfied," he says. "I eventually quit and took a swan dive into the world of art. I'd been creating art as far back as I can remember, but when a classmate from high school who'd graduated with a film degree asked me if I would help him with a project, I finally realised I could make money doing this!"

After buying his first tablet, Garret worked tirelessly to master his craft. "Now I freelance for a variety of companies, which keeps me busy and happy." A win-win situation, we say!

1



2



3

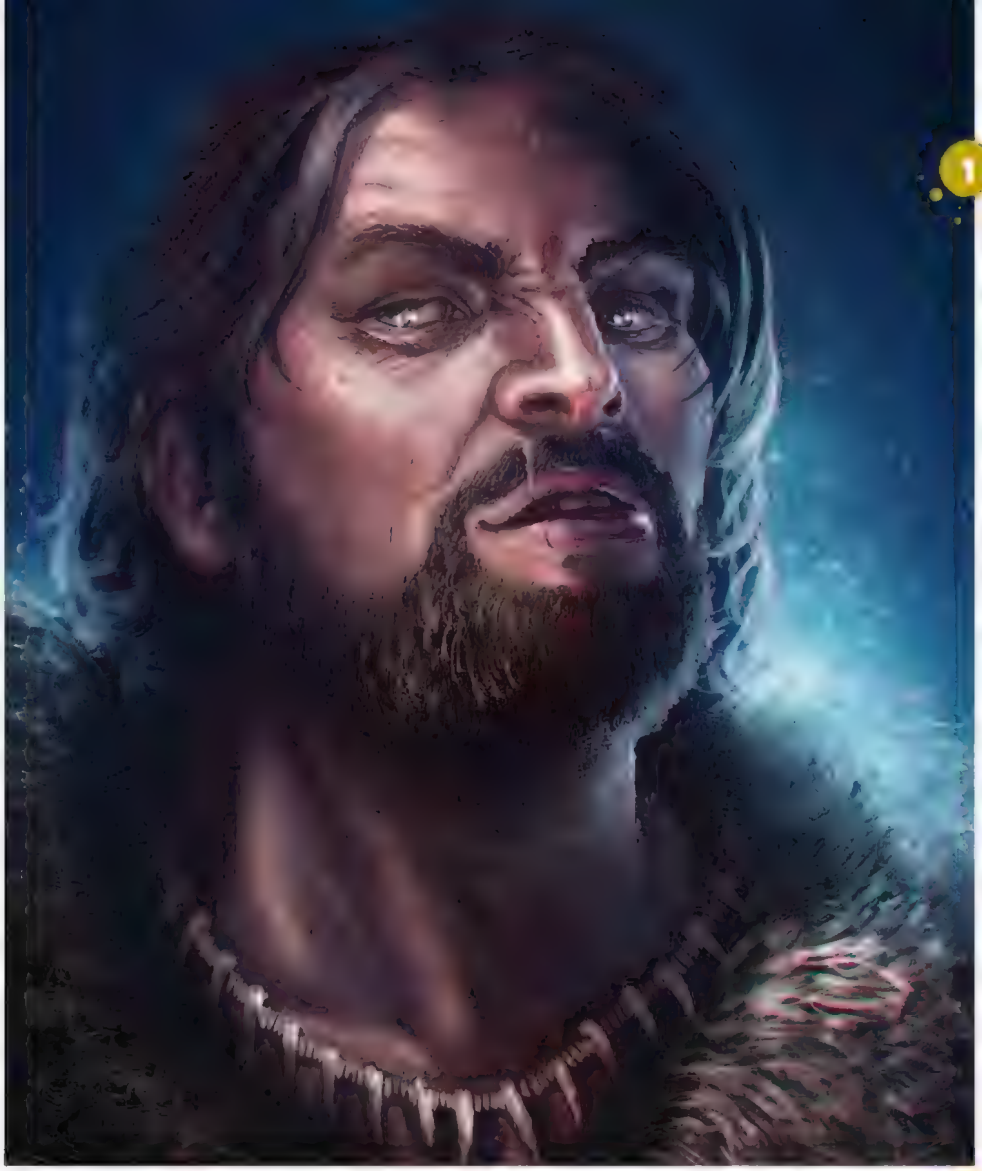


1 BRUTE "I tend to see a lot of protagonists out there facing impossibly large monsters with complete confidence. I want tension and drama. Here the hero and his comrades are caught off guard, and the chains make you think twice about which side to root for."

2 JINN "This is my take on the jinn, or classic genie. Genies have had a tendency to be depicted as buff blue men with smoky trails, but they can be sexy women with horns and purple ribbons, too."

3 ARCH ANGEL "I grew up in a religious household and always wondered what angels looked like. I couldn't believe that all of those ancient paintings were accurate, so I thought I'd contribute to the inaccuracy. Yes, he has metal skin/armour, so shut up."

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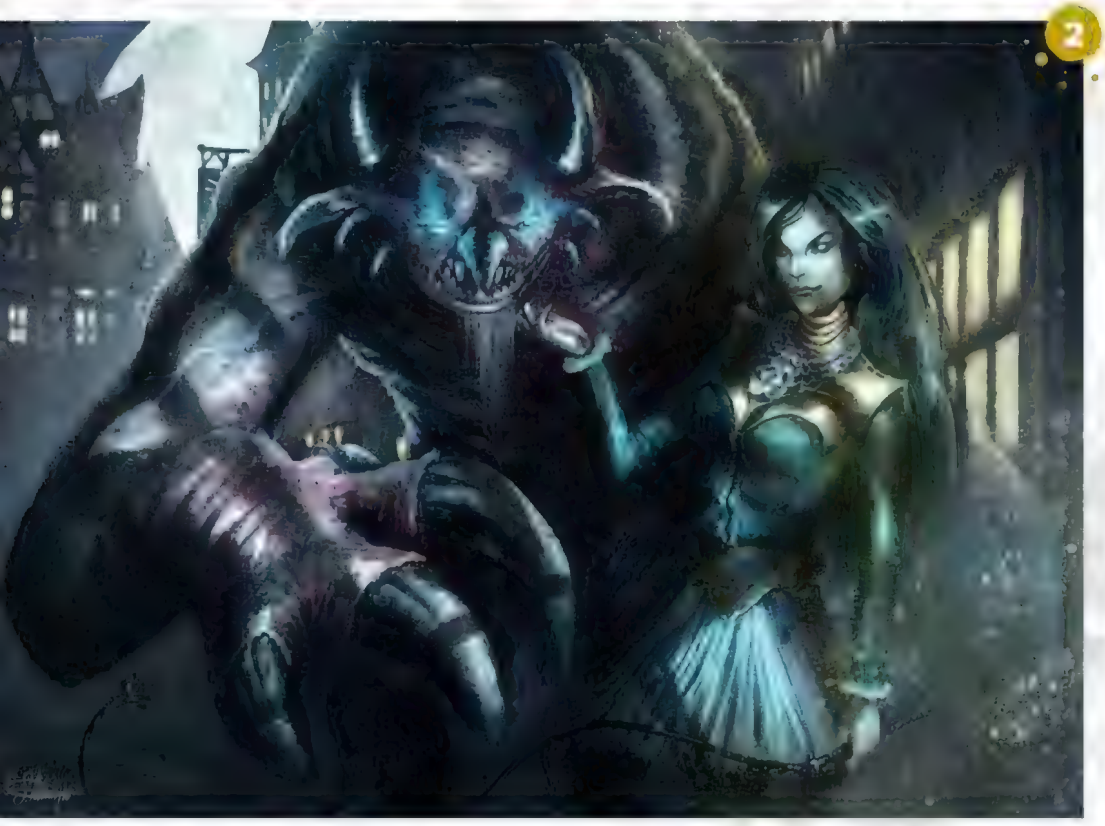
Suzanne Helmigh

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Suzanne feels she started to realise her full artistic potential when freelance work first began to roll in. "Before my first professional clients, art was just a hobby and I had my eyes set on the film industry, wanting to be a director," she says. "Now I work on both concept art and illustration, which are very different to me."

Suzanne has created art for RPG card game companies along with several internet and mobile games developers, and recently got the chance to create art based on one of her favourite things. "One of my biggest inspirations had always been JJR Tolkien's books, and last year I had the honour to illustrate a complete Lord of the Rings card game for Sophisticated Games."



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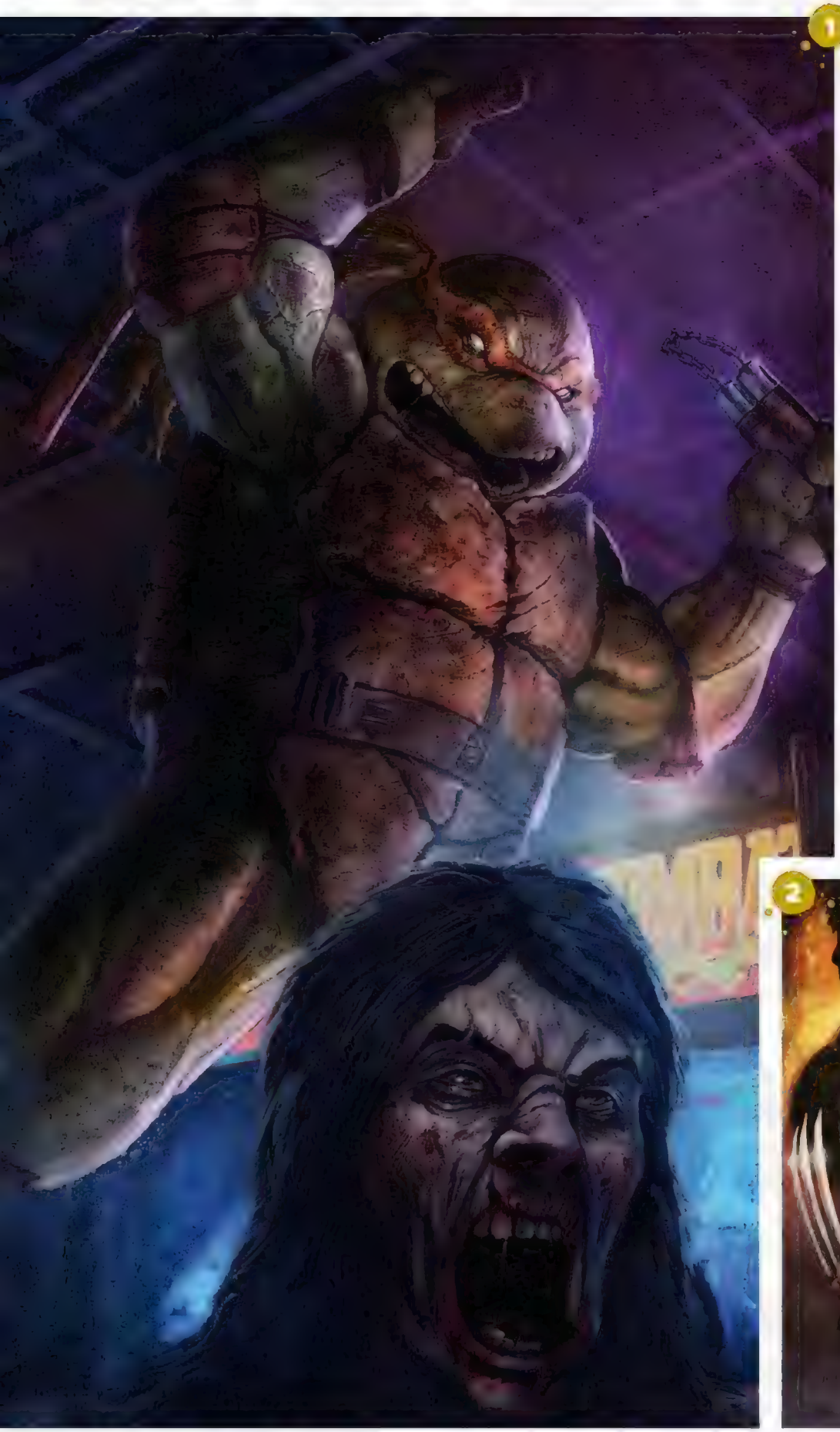


"Painting characters who are morally grey can be a more interesting experience than tackling a clean-cut hero, or an out-and-out baddie. The scarred visage of Suzanne's mercenary suggests that this guy has plenty of stories to tell."

Claire Howson, ImagineFX Editor

1 BORUS "A traveller from a fantasy world; a work-for-hire kind of person. He will simply do anything for money: slay a dragon, save a damsel in distress or fight against mighty goblin necromancers. This personal piece served as practice for adding character to a portrait."

2 MONSTER PUPPETEER "No one dares to harm this lady when she wanders the streets at night, because she always brings along her pet. I've always loved old European architecture, which was my inspiration for the background. Most of my personal work takes place in the same fantasy world."



Blake Henriksen

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



If you've been around the US comic shows recently, Blake's striking work may have already stopped you in your tracks. "Right now, my real passion is comic art and I'm looking to make my way into the industry as a cover illustrator. I've started to do the convention circuit to try and make that happen."

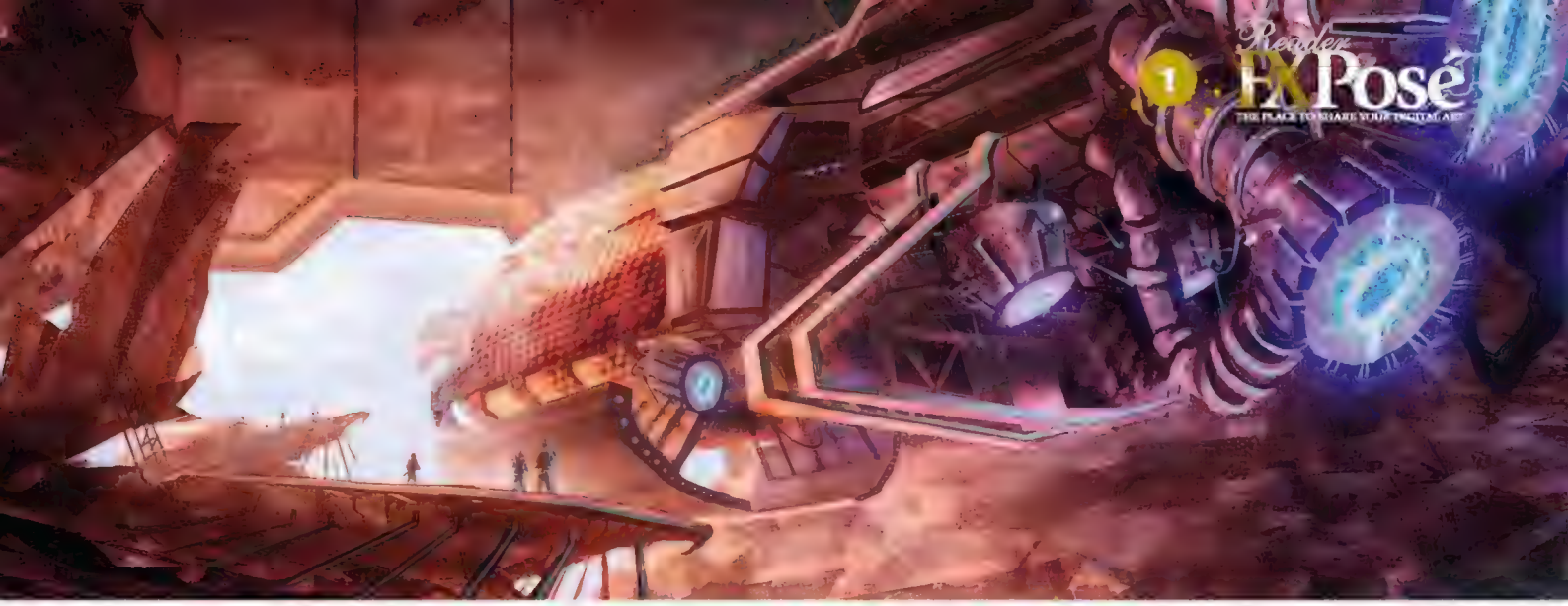
After graduating in 2010, Blake has worked as an illustrator and concept artist in the games industry on titles including Legends of Norrath, Warhammer: Invasion, and Lord of the Rings: the TCG. "I'd say that when I first came across digital painting back in 2007, it changed my life."

1 TMNT VS ZOMBIES: MICHELANGELO "When you're stuck in the cramped quarters of a New York city video arcade things can change quickly. It looks like Mikey has the upper hand on this dead head... but will it stay that way?"

2 NEW FANTASTIC FOUR "With growing up in the 90s, I really got into comics. I loved when Marvel had Hulk, Ghost Rider, Wolverine and Spiderman join up to be the New Fantastic Four. It was such a 90s thing to do! So this is my homage to that love of 90s comics."



FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com





Ian Jun Wei Chiew

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Ian is a Malaysian artist working on his bachelor of fine arts degree at the Academy of Art University, San Francisco. "My goal at the moment is to make the most of being at art school, to learn and grow as an artist and to meet friends that have the same vision," he says.

Ian has a strong interest in sci-fi and fantasy environmental design, and reveals that he'd love to work as a concept artist and illustrator, "bringing new ideas that have never been seen before to the film and gaming industry."

IMAGINEFX ART



"The composition of the Techscape painting is fantastic. Everything in the painting pulls you into the scene, from the insect ship's perspective, the walkway, disc shapes and decreasing moons on the horizon."

[illegible]
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1 THE DEPARTURE "This is a military zone hidden away in a cave, far from the city. A lot of weapons testing and experiments are done here, and this is one of the latest battle crafts being sent out to war."

2 TECHSCAPE "A world far in the future where buildings and vehicles are inspired by insects. This is a city in disarray, where all natural environments are forever lost. Although their technology is advanced, the people fail to save the Earth."

Ossi Hiekkala
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EMAIL: ossi@archipictor.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Since 2005, Ossi has been busily working as a freelance artist after spending a few years studying illustration in Japan, where he was lucky enough to meet masters such as Sorayama. "Like many others of my generation, I got the spark to become an illustrator from comics, RPGs and paperback covers. My dream came true when I was offered a chance to create new covers for the Finnish reprints of Edgar Rice Burroughs's John Carter series."

Ossi started out as an acrylic painter, but began to dabble in digital painting before completely falling in love with it. "Digital art gave me new artistic ways to express what I wanted to create. Nowadays I make most of my commercial works in Photoshop."

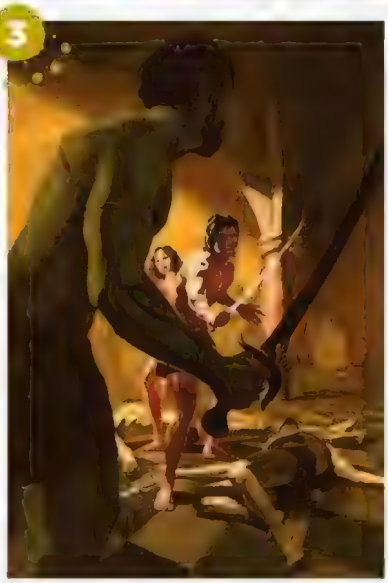
IMAGINEFX ART



"What makes Ossi's art stand out is the fact that even though every scene is so beautifully illustrated for us, the viewer is still free to imagine the faces that lay behind the shadows. Now that's clever composition for you!"
Nicole Thompson, Staff Writer







1 THUVIA, MAID OF MARS "Thuvia isn't a typical damsel in distress – she's very capable of taking care of herself. The struggle between the green men of Mars and a deadly Banth is something that fascinated me greatly."

2 A PRINCESS OF MARS "For the iconic tale, I wanted to create a cover that had a classical feel, but with some unorthodox features. I've always enjoyed finding an interesting composition and getting rid of unnecessary elements."

3 THE WARLORD OF MARS "I thought it was the right time to give John Carter a face. I wanted to show his thirst for battle. The face is still in the shadows, as I didn't want to force my idea of his appearance too strongly on the viewer."

4 THE GODS OF MARS "With this cover, I wanted to recreate the mood from the old pirate movies that featured the likes of Errol Flynn and Douglas Fairbanks."

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com



John Charles
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Poser, Carrara, Painter



"I've been into comics since I was 12, and now I'm a comic book artist and colourist," John tells us. "I've been a graphic designer for Trident Comics, and have been involved with 2000 AD's Future Shocks, Marvel UK, Antarctic Press in the US, and Panini UK's Marvel Heroes comic." Very busy then!

The Surrey-based artist has also co-written a three-part Spider-Man and X-Men crossover story for Panini UK, along with recent colouring for Boom Studios' Extermination comic. "I like to combine traditional drawing and inking methods with digital colouring in Photoshop, sometimes using Carrara and Poser to make 3D models to lift lighting from."

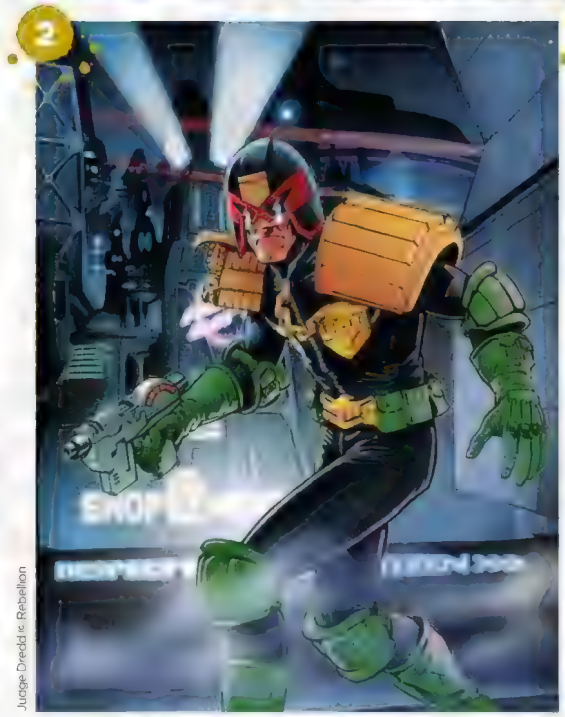
IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I like John's experimentation in Tech-Head – not just with 2D and 3D software, but with form. This guy's a cross between Bono (The Fly period), and the inside of a cable. I'm not usually a fan, but that's one hell of a ponytail!"
Beren Neale, Features Editor



1 TECH-HEAD "An early experiment in combining drawing, 3D models and Photoshop techniques. This one was an early effort and was used as a cover for a US comic called Variance."



Judge Dredd © Rebellion

2 JUDGE DREDD "Dredd is my favourite comic book character, and I created this one recently as a sample piece. The background actually came from an entirely different picture that I was working on at the time."



Iron Man © Marvel

3 HELA "Here's Marvel's Hela, made for a charity auction at a comic convention. I used Poser to create the figure, along with a few bits made in Carrara. I combined my drawings with a photo of a plastic skull that I set fire to. The piece was finished in Photoshop."

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com



Leann and Karin Regenass

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.bit.ly/ifx-regenass
EMAIL: yuna_merus@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, mixed media



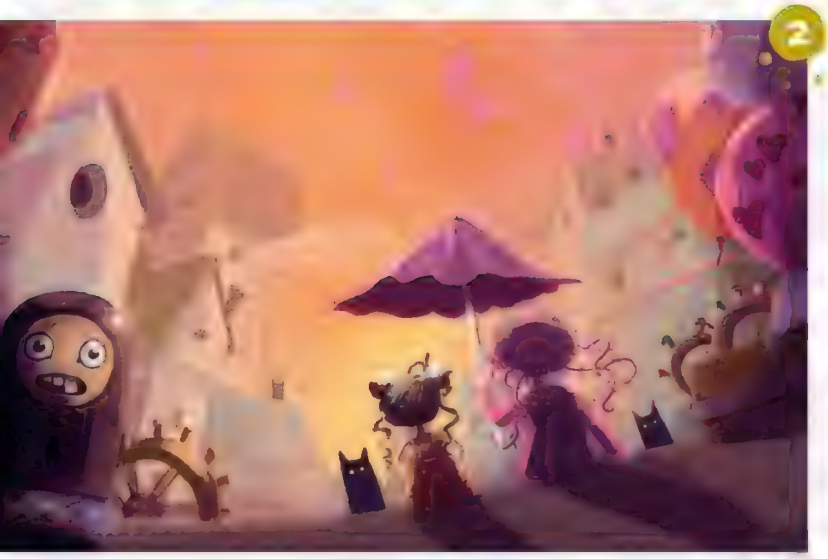
For sisters and artists-in-arms Leann and Karin, art has always been a means of escape during tough times. "We were born in Switzerland and at the age of 13 we moved to Mauritius. My mother is from there, and things haven't always been easy. Art helped us to get through and always push on. We always work together, creating our own worlds and all that comes with it."

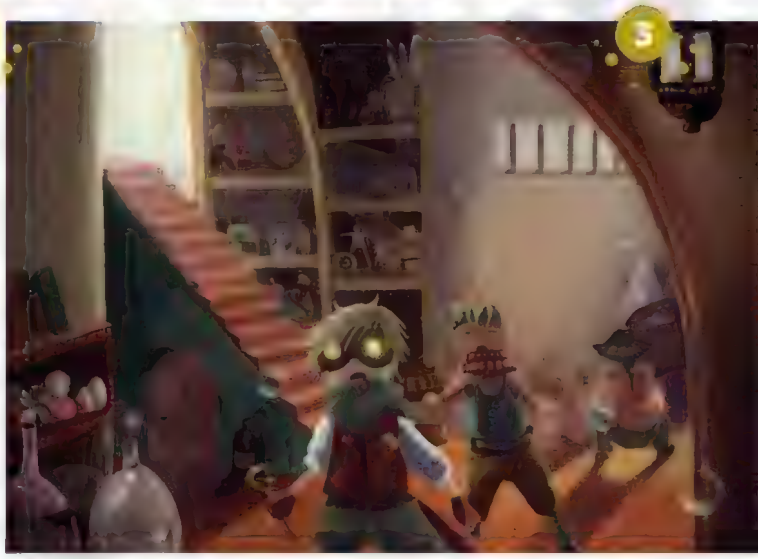
Also going by the working name Marchand des Reves, Leann and Karin came to San Francisco to study at the Academy of Art University. "We just hope to be able to do what we love forever and get our art out there," Leann tells us. "What more could we ask for?"

1 I MET THE WINTER FOREST TODAY "This piece is about Guinevere, a strange girl who wakes in a winter forest with a companion called Skritz. Intrigued by her sudden presence, forest spirits come from all sides to see the stranger in their home. She woke in the midst of their breeding ground, astonished by the colourful eggs around her."

2 TIMES WITH YOU "This is from our story The Secrets of the Clockworld, featuring the characters Pandora and Chicoree gazing at the city, just happy to have each other. The city is full of curious little creatures that wander freely on the streets."

3 THE SECRET ROOM "Here, one of our characters, Rowan, discovers a secret room inside his dormitory with his friends, which holds many mysterious objects that they have never seen before. What is going on down here?"





Sergey Musin
LOCATION: Russia
WEB: www.samfx.com
EMAIL: samfx@outlook.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Maya



When you see Sergey's incredible talents, it's no wonder the Russian artist has been working as a concept artist in the global entertainment circuit for some time now. "I've worked for several international CG production studios and publishers, creating art for TV, films, video games and advertising," he says. "It was my work for media concept production that first got me into video game design, which is what I'm devoting my time to."

Although Sergey started out as a traditional painter, he switched to the digital arts as his career progressed. "Some of my recent projects have included working on a fantasy MMO RPG and creating concept design for a Russian film called Admiral, about the Russian Civil War."





1 A NEW HOPE "For this ambiguous scene I wanted to combine elements of Russian costume design with a post-apocalyptic world."

2 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS GIVEN "I wanted to create a piece depicting the story of the Ten Commandments that wasn't clichéd, and mixing high fantasy with surrealism. There are a few signs to suggest the angels are sharing knowledge with Moses about right and wrong, creating what we know today."

3 SILENT MONK "A piece from my personal portfolio. This was created with just my imagination and Photoshop – no references, no multi-layers, no 3D. I used only one default brush, and dedicated a week to completing it. It's about a silent monk standing in the void of the universe."

SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300dpi JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

You can also email submissions for FXPosé. Bear in mind that files must be no more than 5MB in total, or we won't receive them.
fxpose@imaginefx.com

SEND YOUR ARTWORK TO:
FXPosé
ImagineFX
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW
UK

3



IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Silent Monk is a powerful and striking image. The range of textures and light across the painting are even more impressive knowing that Sergey only used one default brush, and his imagination. We're not worthy, sir!"

Shona Cutt
Designer

ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

...ASY ART COMMUNITY



Ranzoman mixes manga styles and narrative structure in his art, creating a unique and very popular hybrid



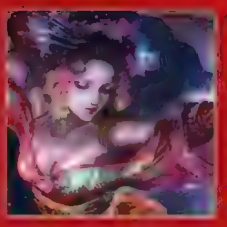
A GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM

Anomly is a sci-fi graphic novel that's been boosted by augmented reality technology. Now you really can watch the story come to life.
Page 24



ART MAGIC MADE REAL

Master artist Donato Giancola show us around his well-worn New York studio, and reveals the secret of his success. Here's a clue: Donato sits down a lot.
Page 26



THE ART OF RONGRONG

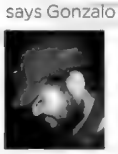
Her web page may be in her native language, but that shouldn't stop anyone from checking out Chinese painter Rongrong Wang's colourful fantasy art.
Page 28

MANGA RENAISSANCE

Global fusion With manga becoming such a global phenomenon, we examine how diversity is the key to evolution

There was once a time in the west when manga was an unknown commodity; an exotic art form from a distant land, worshipped by a select few. Slowly but steadily, its popularity grew beyond the grip of underground circles, until one day, the rest of the world caught on.

"Gone are the days when people saw manga as a surprising and different style," says Gonzalo Ordoñez, better known as modern manga master Genzoman. And he's right – it's now one of the most appealing forms of modern art, with more western artists embracing the form than ever before.



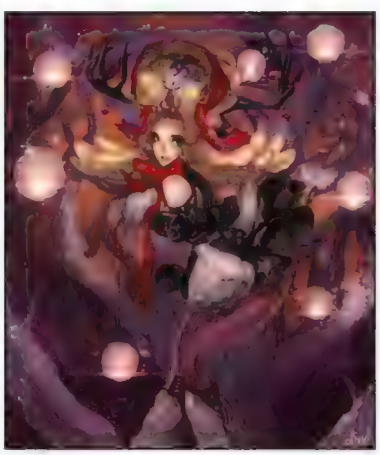
Diversity and evolution are sides of the same coin, and the rise of manga and anime in the west has encouraged artists to add a new dimension to the style. Genzoman suggests that one of the reasons why it's become so popular is that through modern media, the style has filtered into mainstream culture, which encourages more people to give it a go. "Aspiring artists are now able to be amazed by a new style of art along with deeper narrative techniques, which invites them to emulate the style and make it their own."

"Ironically, I used to hate anime when I was younger," says Hector Sevilla Lujan (more commonly known as Elsevilla). "I used to be a Mike Turner clone, but it just didn't suit me somehow. A friend told me to look at the other side of the world for inspiration, and it all clicked."



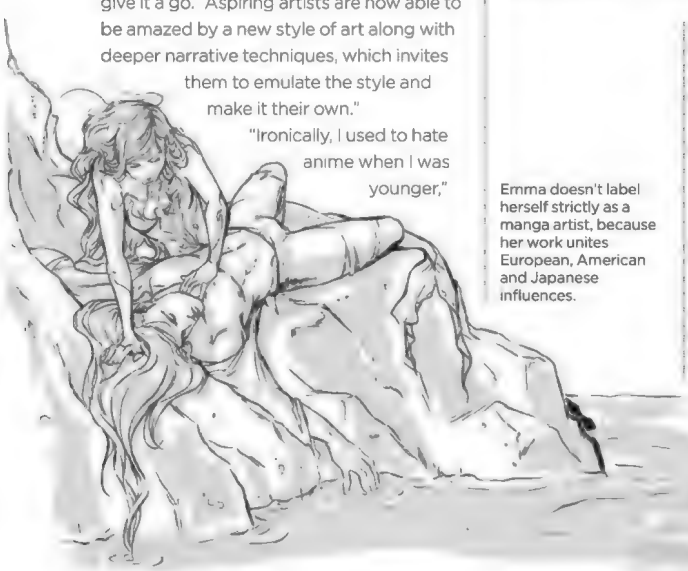
Another reason could be that, compared to American comics, manga is seen as a more accessible to new readers. "It speaks to new audiences who have perhaps struggled to find their voice in the western comic market, especially women," says comic artist and writer Emma Vieceli. "You could be enjoying delicate, whimsical





Elsevilla describes the way he fuses his influences together as "a kid playing with clay".

> **It speaks to new audiences who have perhaps struggled to find their voice in the western comic market**



Emma doesn't label herself strictly as a manga artist, because her work unites European, American and Japanese influences.

HELEN McCARTHY

The renowned manga expert on the expansion of the genre

Why has there been a boom in western artists painting manga?
It's partly the freshness and range of graphic options it offers, and partly a fashion thing. When Frank Miller started using Japanese-style graphics, he legitimised manga as an influence for mainstream comics fans, but the real explosion didn't come until a wider market began to realise that manga includes so many style options and has traditions that enable the artist to approach storytelling in a different way than American comics.

How do eastern and western manga artists inspire each other?
Japanese artists have been clued in to western art styles since the 1800s, and manga artists are no different. It's no surprise that artists today are doing the same thing. Sharing visual ideas and trends is so much easier over the Internet. Japanese artists are influencing and being influenced by western styles in comics, fine art, film, video, music: it's a huge current that circles the globe.

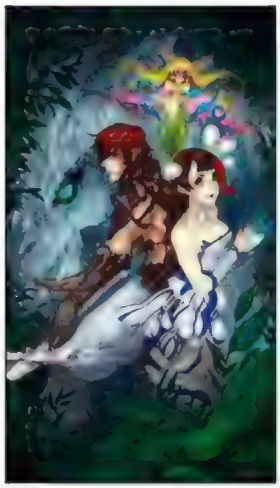
Some believe that western manga art isn't authentic. Why does such a stigma still exist?
People love to put things in boxes and say one thing is superior to another. That's just prejudice and ignorance. However, saying you create manga art if you're not Japanese is also a form of prejudice. It presupposes that manga art is different from other comic art, which is daft. Also, I think we're scared of the sheer scale of manga, the range of art styles it embraces. You can follow certain conventions, but that displays ignorance of the Japanese comic and its possibilities. Why put something into a narrow box when it's so much bigger?



Helen has written many books on manga, with her new book, A Brief History of Manga, hitting stores this September.

www.helenmccarthy.wordpress.com

Continued from previous page...



To Elsevilla, the action and emotion of Japanese art was what made him fall in love with the style.

lines in one comic, and then stark, kooky blacks in another. The variety and scope of manga is massively exciting!"

Manga has its own unique cultural identity, and it's only natural that western artists want to explore their own worlds in a similar fashion, as Elsevilla explains. "A Japanese artist can draw a character eating sushi because they see that every day, but the rest of the world can't draw the same if it's not true. So to make it relevant, you have to understand the reasons beneath it and use it to work well with what's around you."

It's not just a one-way exchange, as Emma points out. "Styles have fused, inspiration has bled and techniques have evolved between continents and generations. Just as manga has opened new doors, western comics also play a part in influencing eastern comics."

There's more to it than a case of copying a template, and the western artists that experiment with manga influences should be taken as seriously as their Asian counterparts. "The merging of styles is positive, as it produces a diverse market which can become an entry point for young people," says Genzoman, which is a sentiment echoed by many. As Elsevilla puts it, "it's about taking the best parts from the best and seeing where it takes you." And what's the harm in that?



With such a rich history to explore, Duel of Champions has a lot of scope for creative experimentation.

Mighty fine art

Vital statistics Does art matter as much as power? Ubisoft 's Duel of Champions thinks so...

Two years ago, the team at Ubisoft Quebec wanted to expand the popular Might & Magic series with a new and challenging online card game. A few months later, Universe of Might & Magic: Duel of Champions was born.

Duel of Champions has since become a hit with players, and the artwork created for the game has continued to raise the bar for online card games.



"We've never stopped creating new cards in over two years!" Louis-Etienne Beaupré says. "We're working with several guidelines to unify all games, which will also help new artists adapt to our art direction and style." The game puts artwork and gameplay on the same pedestal, with many popular cards holding both "great artwork and a great gameplay advantage."

Such a rich universe called for a specific artistic approach, as Louis explains. "The team has a lot of freedom to explore how we want to represent the variety of cards in a way that respected and made sense in the Might & Magic universe."

See more great art over at **www.duelofchampions.com**, and for more on Ubisoft Quebec, turn to page 112.

A modern master

Digital canvas We found out how digital and traditional art can get along at Corel Painter Live

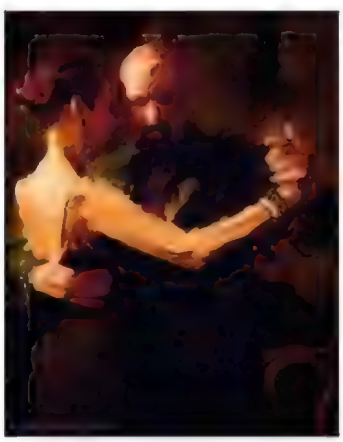
For many artists, one of the most appealing aspects of digital painting is the ability to replicate traditional mediums without breaking your back over an easel.

Jeremy Sutton has mastered the knack of crafting digital works that could easily pass for heavy oil pieces, rather than the result of a Wacom Intuos 5 and Corel Painter 12, as demonstrated at the recent Corel Painter Live event in London. "My key focus is to capture the essence of passion and feeling. I always start out with abstract forms, but I focus on the energy, movement and overall composition," he says.



For Jeremy, the key to uniting digital and traditional styles is to not get bogged down by realistic representation, as the modern Impressionists demonstrated. "If an artist is working from a photo, it can be easy to be trapped into getting every detail right. For me, a unique, expressive and personal interpretation is what brings a painting to life!"

Head over to **www.bit.ly/jeremy-sutton-ifx** to read our full interview with Jeremy.



Digital art can capture the essence of the modern masters if the right approach is taken.



Corel Painter Live provided a great opportunity to watch Jeremy put his methods into practice in live demonstrations.



Let the battle against creative stagnation commence! We can't wait to see more of Derick's puppet-style artwork.

Time to re:INVENT

First look We take a sneak peak at what Magnus Rex will be unveiling at this year's Comic-Con

If you're heading to San Diego Comic-Con, keep your eyes peeled for re:INVENT, an art book from creative studio Magnus Rex that will be debuting at this year's event.

Make no mistake, this is no ordinary collection of artwork. "re:INVENT is our response to the plateaus and stagnation all artists experience at some point," says creative director Derick Tsai. "In 2008, we hit a wall creatively, but I believed the key to our evolution both as a studio and as individual artists lay in the original ideas that were gathering cobwebs in the back of our minds. The book is a showcase of the work and the personal stories that transformed the studio."



The collection explores the overriding theme of reinvention, with each artist crafting unique interpretations of what this entails. "Some artists decided to refocus on a small section of their existing repertoire, while others chose to do something completely different to anything they've done before. We all had a personal 'dream project' in our back pockets, and this book was the perfect opportunity to bring these visions to reality." The collection will also include artwork from special guests Gallery Nucleus and Francis Tsai.

The book will be available to buy from Comic-Con, and will also be available through several online retailers. Visit **www.magnusrex.com** for more details.



No creative stone is left unturned, as Angela Zhu demonstrates with her fashion pieces.

We're looking forward to seeing more of Stephen Chang's playful exploration of the colour pink.



In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists



Re-release **Star Wars**

Missed out on the 2011 limited edition Star Wars Blu-ray steelbooks? Fear not, younglings – Lucasfilm and Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment have announced that both original trilogy and prequel collections will be re-released this April. Both collections will be packaged in new, exclusive and collectible steelbook artwork. You can find out more at **www.fox.co.uk**.

User talent **CorelDRAW Design Contest**

Want to showcase your CorelDRAW skills to the world? Entries are now open for the CorelDRAW international Design Contest 2013, with prizes worth over $100,000 up for grabs. Entry period ends 30 June. To get involved visit **www.corel.com** today!

Children's app **Jackie Junko**

UK and Hong Kong Creative design company Springy Thingy has unveiled Jackie Junko, an interactive iPad book for children that aims to ignite their imaginations. The book has been brought to life with vivid and vibrant illustrations, featuring a unique style that incorporates Eastern and Western design elements. Check it out at **www.springythingy.com**.



Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"Much of your future work will come from word of mouth, so it pays to be easy to work with!"

We can't help but wonder if PJ Holden speaks from experience... *See page 80*





Qualcomm SDK made image recognition a workable option, allowing AR to be keyed into any image in the book.

Anomaly detected

Augmented reality Introducing the graphic novel with a real twist – you really won't believe your eyes...

It's tough being an innovator these days, but here's a graphic novel that dares to test the boundaries of the art form. Anomaly is a brand new title that integrates augmented reality technology into the story via an accompanying app, bringing pages to life like never before.

Over four years in the making, Anomaly is a sprawling sci-fi epic written by Skip Brittenham (who made his career as a Hollywood A-list lawyer), with the striking artwork created by comic veteran



Brian Haberlin. "We worked together to build it out into an immersive and cinematic experience," Brian says. "The AR makes something come alive from a page."

Brian adapts an animation approach to comic creation, with initial artwork already set out as 3D models. "The biggest challenge is finding ways to optimise meshes and textures with the current AR limits on mobile devices."

See more at **www.bit.ly/ifx-anomaly**.

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Please note: Disc content is now available from issue 85 onwards.

deviantART

+deviantWATCH

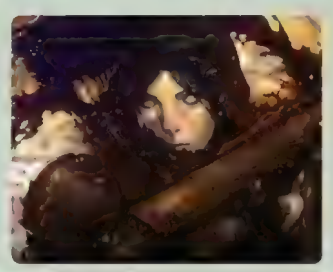
Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



Grypwolf

www.grypwolf.deviantart.com

There's a major clue in this artist's name that sums up what this little lady is all about: wolves, and lots of them. There are many magnificent beasts to behold in this portfolio, all lovingly rendered in a smooth and crisp style that jumps off the screen. It certainly gave us paws for thought. Arf.



Kyrie0201

www.kyrie0201.deviantart.com

Kyrie0201's growing gallery of refined manga art is causing quite the stir on dA. It's a sumptuous collection of original and atmospheric character portraits, with each piece delicately and precisely composed from beautiful muted colour palettes and expressive strokes.



Dark134

www.dark134.deviantart.com

With a gallery showcasing an eclectic mix of digital and traditional pieces, Dark134's gallery is bound to inspire. Whether crafting cute emotional anime girls or experimenting with style and form, this artist's collection is brimming with imagination and intrigue.



My table stand top is filled with 20 years' worth of drawing utensils. It's not the materials that are important, it's the hand that guides the thought.

North-facing bank of third floor windows. I work almost exclusively by daylight.

I'm proud to say that I've never had any back problems in the 22 years I have sat in this chair! James Gurney was perched on an exact sister of this when he was a budding artist working on the background paintings of Fire and Ice.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Donato Giancola

Home-made magic Master of modern fantasy, Donato explains how your studio can quickly become the most magical place on Earth...



We're all envious of other artist's studios, feeling that if we had just the right light, space and tools, we could be creating masterpieces all the time. With frequent visitors dropping by my studio, from fans to collectors and artists, I speculate a few may be trying to uncover the secret magic I have which facilitates these 'masterpieces'. As a special treat for ImagineFX readers, I'm going to share the inner workings of my success.

Here's the secret... keep your ass in that chair. I'm not talking about just eight hours today, or four weeks this month, nor 52 weeks this year. I'm talking about a lifetime.

You see me now as an artist adeptly swinging oils, pencils and glazes around as if I were born to do so. But it wasn't always

Colour-balanced florescent lights for working at night, and during the dark and dreary months of December and January.

I use a disposable white palette to mix colours upon and I keep my paints on a separate slab of plexiglass. This helps as I prepare large puddles of thin glazes and need to change my mixing surface from day to day.

I love being able to back up a good three meters from my works-in-progress and assess composition, details, colour and overall balances, before diving in again.



that way. The key to my success was making sure I was in the studio painting or drawing, or planning a trip to a museum, art show, lecture, or event nearly every day of my life over the past 25 years. Passion and time is the key, and nothing else.

So take a glimpse into my studio and uncover my secrets. My parents got me the drafting table when I was 21, from the University of Vermont's engineering department, as they cleared the way for CAD software and computers. My swivel chair dates from the 1970s and was picked out of the trash at Syracuse University when they were preparing the studios for 'better' equipment. While my home-made palette cart was nailed and screwed together from New York City street-found recycled wood.

There's no magic here for you. The magic is what you make of it. So make some magic in your studio today...

Donato is a modern master of fantasy and sci-fi art, fusing together history with contemporary culture. Visit www.donatoart.com for more.



Well-loved oak flat files from the turn of the century (the previous one!). These store my papers, drawings and assorted art and prints.



Wall of reference books bursting with historical and contemporary art, artists and subjects.



PLANET OF THE ARTS

HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE EVENTS AND ART BLOGS THAT HAVE GOT US IN A STIR THIS MONTH. IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY OR EVENT THAT SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, SEND US THE DETAILS: **PLANET@IMAGINEFX.COM**. CHEERS!

Nicola Henderson, Staff Writer

MATT RHODES
Concept artist | Canada

1 Matt works as a concept artist at BioWare and his blog makes for a fascinating read on the pursuit of artistic growth. There's also some great pieces of fan art.
www.mattrhodesart.blogspot.co.uk

KINMAN CHAN
Tutorial video | US

2 Story Locker art director Kinman shares his digital process in a new video tutorial. It's a brilliant way to pick up a few tips and get an insight into his creative approach.
www.pijjenmedia.com/kinman.html

ALEKSI BRICLOT
Exhibition | Switzerland

3 Concept artist Aleksi presents Genèse: des croquis à l'oeuvre (Genesis: from sketches to final), an exhibition at Maison d'Ailleurs, in Yverdon-les-Bains, from 3 March.
www.ailleurs.ch

ANIKA RÓĐNOWICZ
Illustrator | Poland

4 Chocoraspberries, the title for Anika's blog, sums everything up. Be prepared for cute manga pieces packed with candy colours, pretty clothes and plenty of giggles!
www.anikakinka.tumblr.com



JUSTINAS KRASUCKAS

Artist | Lithuania

5 His oil paintings and ink drawings have been exhibited in galleries and Justinas can turn his imagination to anything. He sometimes combines digital and traditional artwork.

www.bit.ly/ifx-justinas

RONGRONG WANG

Artist | China

6 With such sumptuous images, it's no wonder Rongrong is one of China's most sought-after fantasy artists. Keep track of her creations and fascinating insights.

www.bit.ly/ifx-rwang

SKETCH JAM

Unleash your inner Valentino at London's hottest fashion illustration class



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COST:
W.I.B.:



The class covers all kinds of fashion, from contemporary to vintage.





Gaining an awareness of how proportion interacts with costume is one of the key aspects of each lesson.

We adore this kitsch sci-fi inspired outfit!

FANTASY SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Forum

Winners

Image of the month

Gone walkabouts It looks like Daenerys Targaryen of Game of Throne fame isn't the only one who's looking out for her lost dragon…

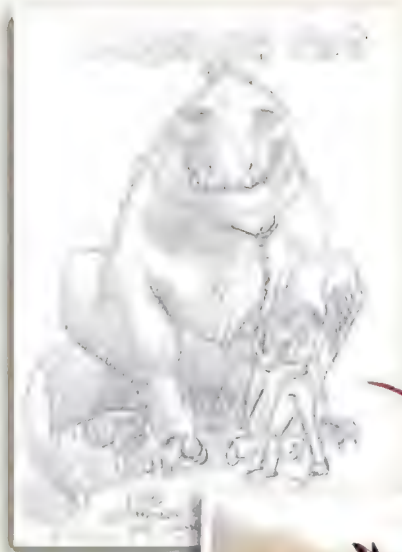


When forum veteran Antonio saw the brief to create a poster for a missing fantastic pet, he found that simplicity was the best approach. "I always try to put my own spin on how I interpret the challenge title, although this time, the final result was pretty straightforward," he says.

Antonio regularly participates in our challenges for two reasons. "The first is how fun it is to paint something quickly, and the second is the collaborative spirit of the challenges and fellow forum users. With this piece, my aim was to play with complementary colours and pay attention to the little details, such as the paper wrinkles and staples."

Lost my pet
Antonio Rodríguez Cano (cano)
www.imaginefx.com/cano
www.bit.ly/myfx-315





As far as big scary dragons go, this one was set to look pretty darn cute.



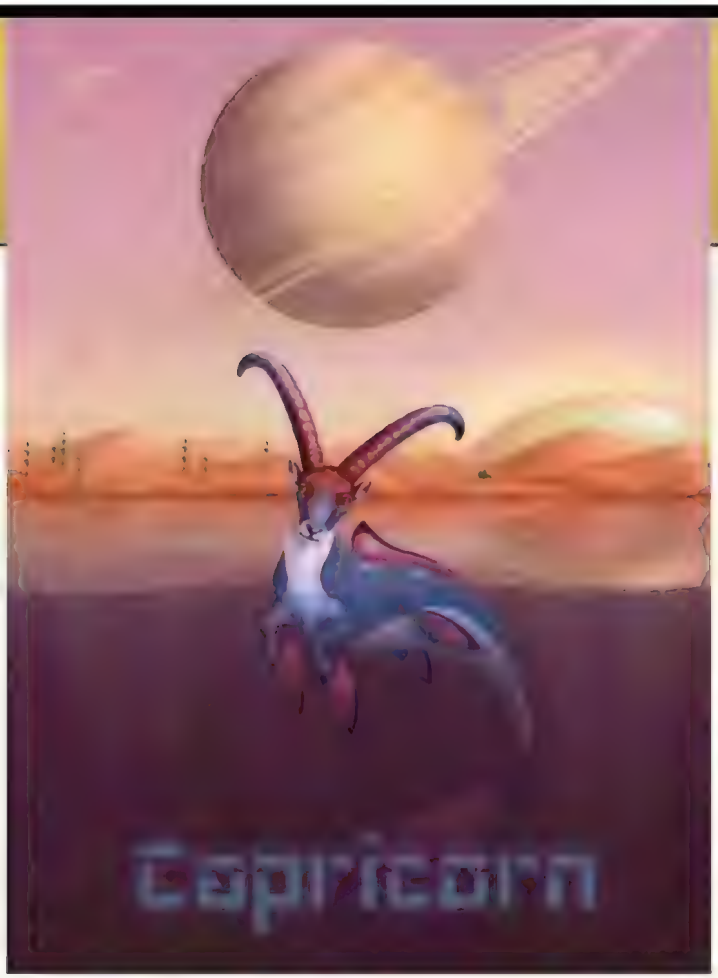
As Antonio moved onto the colour stage, the dragon's personality started to take shape.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Cano's entry made me smile. The tearaway contact numbers and staples defined the poster nicely and fitted the theme very well." Daniel Arbuckle (Luckyman TaDa)

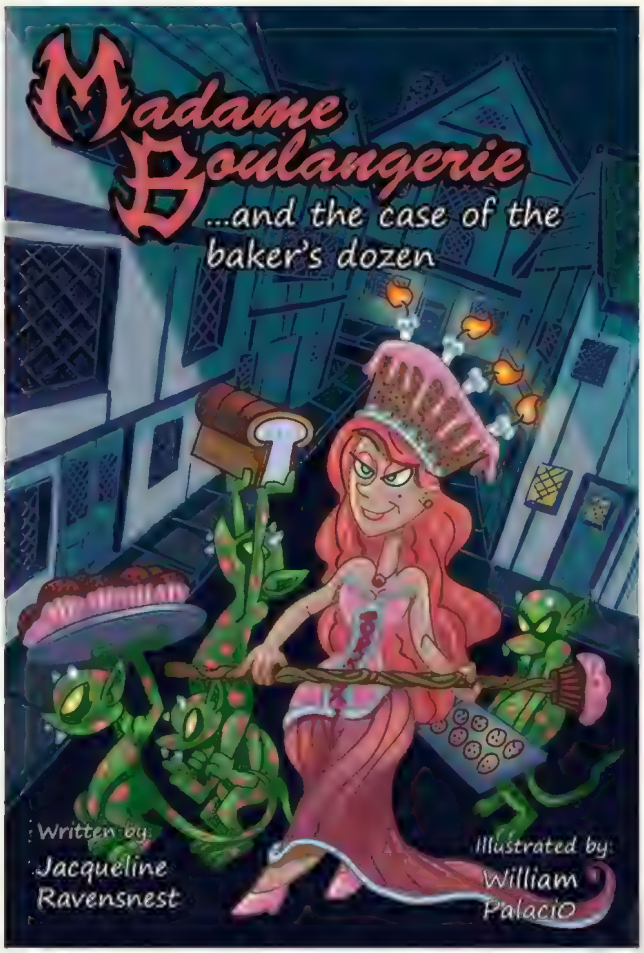
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MYFX TITLE: **Zodiac Sci-Fi Style**
[illegible]: **Charlotte Ahlgren (voluspa)**
[illegible]: **www.imaginefx.com/voluspa**
ALL ENTRIES: **www.bit.ly/myfx-313**



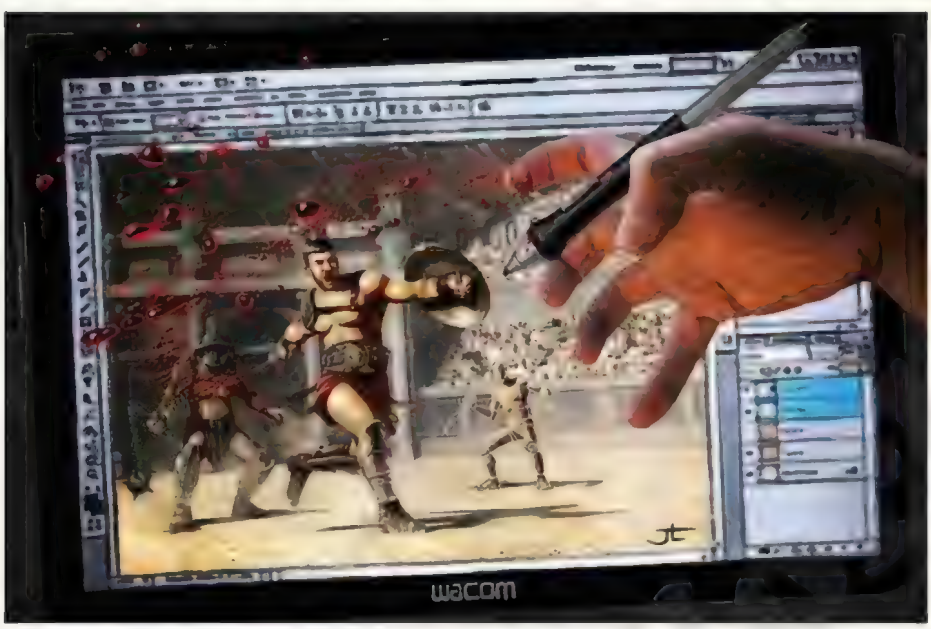
"I found it difficult not to create a fantasy piece rather than sci-fi, but I tried to imply that this is an alien world instead of something mythical. My fellow forum users advised me to add an extra planet in the background, which helped to make it more sci-fi. Capricorn is a combination of goat and fish, so I tried to imagine what a goat would look like if it lived in the sea. The Ibex horns are probably terribly impractical while swimming, but the Swedish names for Ibex and Capricorn are the same, and they're just beautiful, so I had to have them!"



MYFX TITLE: **Madame Boulangerie**
[illegible]: **William Palacio (evil-robot2)**
[illegible]: **www.imaginefx.com/evil-robot2**
ALL ENTRIES: **www.bit.ly/myfx-311**



"The theme was to create a new character that lived in a bakery, for children under 12. I quickly pictured a story about an evil sorceress and her band of imps that stalk a local village at night, stealing all the baked goods. It was also a plus that I could enter the contest and work on a piece for my portfolio at the same time."



MYFX TITLE: **Art Gladiators**
[illegible]: **Jason Lee (Vektor)**
[illegible]: **www.imaginefx.com/vektor**
ALL ENTRIES: **www.bit.ly/myfx-december**



"I chose to interpret the theme literally, envisioning a classic Roman gladiator as an actual work of digital art who has come to life and turned on his creator. I don't draw characters that often, so it was a good opportunity to stretch myself a little bit and put many new techniques to practical use. The sun-drenched lighting and multi-layered blood effects were the most challenging elements, forcing me to skimp on some of the background and peripheral details just to make the deadline, but I'm still pleased with the end result."

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Ian Dean, on ian.dean@futurenet.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

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Creature spotter



Regan loved Terryl Whitlach's feature on creature design in issue 93 and wants to know about other great artists who work in this area.

I want to extend a huge thank you for introducing me to Terryl Whitlatch in the March issue. I've been fascinated by creature design and alternative anatomy for a while and Terryl's work really resonated with me. I can't wait for her new book to come out in August! I'm also loving Neville Page. Are there any other artists you can suggest for animal anatomy and creature design based heavily on already-existing animals?
Regan, via email

Ian replies: I'm so glad you liked Terryl's feature. She's a great artist with a wealth of knowledge. For other inspiration I'd point you in the direction of Wayne Barlowe and ImagineFX regular James Gurney. Also visit **www.creaturespot.com** for inspiration.

Mass participation

I love your magazine and I also have the Anatomy specials. The selection of artists is great – their work is stunning. I like the fact you allow new artists to submit artwork for possible publication. Thanks for your help!
Sonia Martins, via email

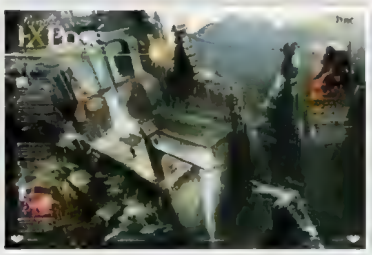
I'm wondering how one is able to have work published in your amazing magazine?
Michael, via email

ImagineFX has helped me so much. How can I get artwork into your magazine?
Carl Springer, via email

Ian replies: Thanks for your letters, guys. We're always eager to hear from new artists and enable you to share your art with our readers. You can either join our website and share work on the gallery and get involved in the forum challenges, or send in your art to fxpose@imaginefx.com for print. Don't hesitate to get involved.



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 94?
We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 55 for details on how to get hold of one.



Our FXPosé pages are a great place for new artists to see their work featured – just drop us an email.

Stick to your guns

You guys are awesome – I've been reading ImagineFX since issue eight. I have a question I've been pondering. I'm a Christian and my question is simply, how do you remain relevant in the industry, get jobs and employment, whilst sticking to your beliefs?

Again, you guys have a pretty legit thing going here, keep it coming. Maybe once I've got a bigger repertoire of digital art I'll submit a few of my own works.
Juan Janse, via email

Ian replies: The straight answer is it shouldn't matter. Everyone is equal and art has no boundaries. ImagineFX features artists from all over the world who are both religious and irreligious. All good employers should do likewise. If anyone has found prejudice, however, then please write in and let us know. Perhaps this is an issue that goes unsaid?

Getting into the industry

Absolutely fantastic magazine! I discovered it a few years ago and look forward to each month's release with perhaps a bit more anticipation than is necessary. I'm writing to you to ask for some general advice about getting into a computer games design career.

I feel I have the personality, intelligence and creative energy that would be perfect for designing games. However, my problem lies with the fact I'm in my final year of a fine art degree, and while this has helped me to hone a lot of skills, it's not enabled me to build up a portfolio of relevant artwork.

So I ask for advice on how to get from where I am now to a place in the design side of the gaming industry. Should I try to make myself known to potential employers now? Or should I build up a portfolio first? What is the likelihood of anyone wanting to take me on as I finish my degree? Any advice or pointers would be much appreciated.
Emma Sedgwick, via email

Ian replies: Well Emma, I'm sure there are plenty of artists reading who can relate to this. I would say you should always be working on your portfolio, show an interest in the industry, start a blog and post regular art, join forums and ask for advice, and share your work. Art directors regularly look online for new talent, so the more you take part the more visible you'll become.



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100 and counting

As the landmark 100th issue of ImagineFX draws nearer I had an idea for what could make an interesting article in that magazine. You could talk to readers who've been getting your mag since issue one, about how their art has changed over those years, what they were doing when the magazine launched, and what they're doing now.

This feature would be a great way to show how ImagineFX has helped readers develop their work, and show how the art on the magazine covers has developed in this time. You could show examples of readers' work from when the mag started and their latest work, and also discuss how their ways of working have changed.

I think this would be of strong interest to readers so I wanted to share the idea with you. Good luck with the 100th!
Stephen Winterflood, via email

Ian replies: You've read our minds Stephen! We've been hard at work thinking of ways to celebrate our 100th issue, with the understanding that our readers are the heart of the magazine. Be sure to visit **www.imaginefx.com** in the coming weeks to find out how you can take part and make our birthday something to remember.



This is the cover of ImagineFX that marked our last big birthday – our 50th. Doesn't time fly! It's a reminder to make good use of it.

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Artists' opinions



"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information that I have ever seen. The magazine is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist who wants to take their skills to the next level."
Andrew Jones, concept artist



"ImagineFX is a unique resource for the science-fiction and fantasy community. It has invaluable tips and techniques for a range of software, and encourages aspiring artists to get their work in print and receive international exposure."
Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

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Artist Q&A

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The ImagineFX panel

Lindsay Cibos



www.lilpoohbears.com

Christy Lijewski



Rob Duenas



Jai



Karl-Jai Hedgecock is a guitarist and model for V-Kei fashion. His art combines dark mythical, longing themes.

www.khaoskai.com

Serge Birault



publishing and advertising. His art book, Corpus Delicti, is available now.

www.sergebirault.fr

Chris Ng



his freelance portfolio.

Saskia Gutekunst



comics, illustration, animation and games.



Question
What are the rules to drawing cute manga creatures?
Lloyd Bullock, US

Answer
Lindsay replies

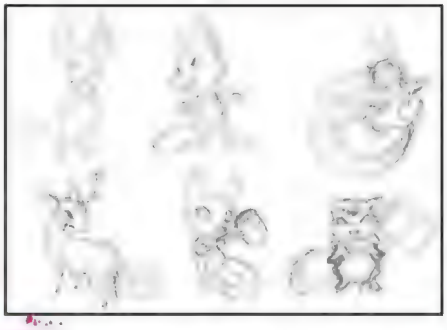


There are some simple guides to help you to draw cute creatures. First, it helps to have a general idea or theme to work with, so think about the qualities you want your creature to embody before you start sketching. Play with proportions and head-to-body ratio. Think plushy: big head, compact body and simple rounded features. Don't be afraid to exaggerate size, such as extra large ears or a long swishy tail. Small works, too: teeny tiny paws, a chocolate chip-sized nose or button eyes. Then add to the creature's appeal by adorning them with a prop, article of clothing, gem or symbol. Just be sure that it ties in with the theme so the overall design has a sense of unity.

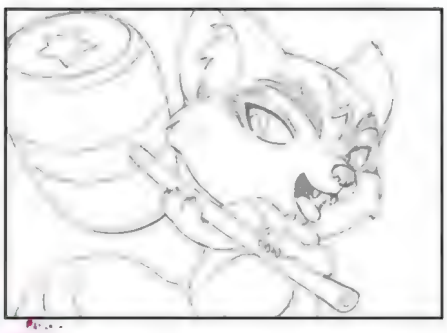
Mixing large and small features enables me to create an incredibly cute character.

For the pose, depict your creature in action, doing something that demonstrates its personality: kicking, leaping or playing, for example. Finally, consider using vivid or unnatural colours to enhance a character's visual appeal.

Step-by-step: Design a cuddly manga critter



1 I fill pages of my sketchbook with creature candidates (magical horses, floppy-eared critters and bipedal cats), but it's not until I ask myself what I'm trying to create that everything clicks. I envision a chibi wolf god leaping through the sky, bashing lightning from the clouds with a large mallet.



2 With specific elements to play with, I'm able to focus on the character's proportions, pose, details and expression, with the goal of pushing the cute factor. Don't go overboard with the details here. Realistically rendered fur, for example, is impressive, but can detract from the cuteness, so keep things simple and round.



3 Layers are useful for tackling the background, character, and effects separately. Paint the background first to set the mood and overall colour scheme. Then you can build up the shading on your critter. Keep the character's colours simple and vibrant. Save the special effects, such as lightning or edge shading, for last.

Question
How can I take a traditional manga creature and make it my own creation?

Claire Davenport, England



I use dramatic lighting and glow to suggest that Kimba is majestic and extraordinary. Some dust implies that there's something going on under the cliff. Adding details makes the image more lively.

Answer
Chris replies



It's always fun to create my own version of an established creature or character design. For this piece I decide to do a pin-up of Kimba the White Lion, a character from the popular 1950s and 1960s manga and anime TV series.

Before drawing the creature, I try to think about the way to execute the overall image. It's critical that you have a clear direction before you start to work on your drawing, because it makes the process a lot easier later on. Try to make this a habit and you'll have a more efficient workflow.

After I've got a rough idea, I use Google Images to get a better vision of what I'll create – and I may even be able to improve my idea during this stage. I want to combine real white lion cubs with the traditional manga Kimba, which was designed with a more human, child-like face. I decide to keep the human eyes in my version, but give it a more realistic lion cub anatomy. I add a sense of power by positioning him on a cliff, looking intently at something off-canvas, and I incorporate a flowing mane to suggest a blowing wind in the scene.



I reference the realistic anatomy of a real lion cub, then try to make the face look more human.

Artist's secret

DO THE GROUNDWORK

Gather plenty of images of your chosen beast in various position to ensure it looks realistic. For this image, I use pictures of both adult and young lions in active poses to gain an accurate idea of posture. In addition, an image of white lion cubs running gives me a sense of action and anatomy.

Question
How do I quickly paint a zombie for a comic?
Vanja Torkel, Sweden

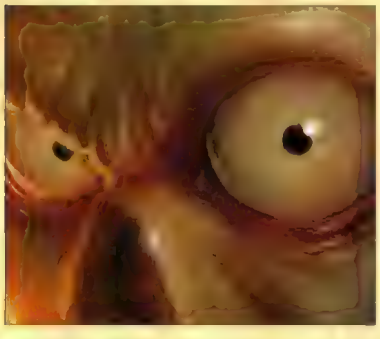


Answer
Serge replies



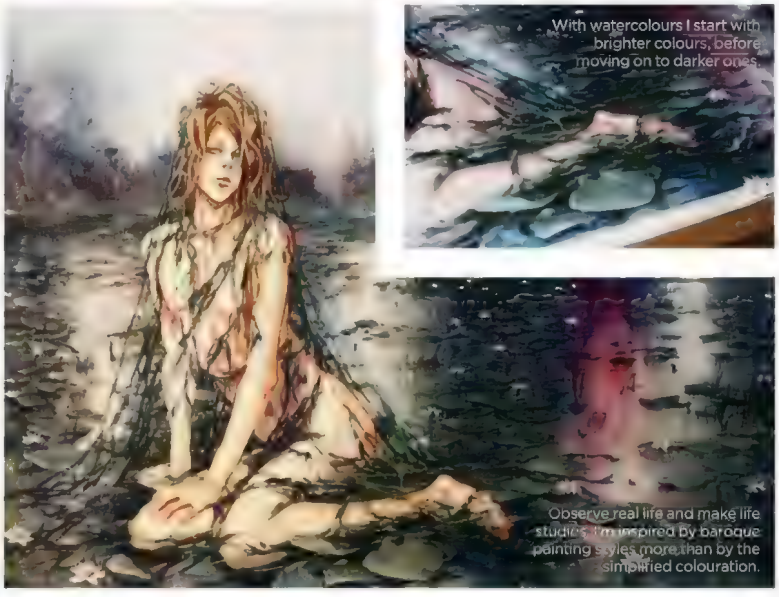
Rotten flesh is a good excuse to work with very textured brushes. Indeed, instead of painting a precise and detailed picture, try to use different 'dirty' brushes. I'm using a lot of Ditlev brushes and Photoshop for this one – you can easily find them online. Use your brush like a stamp: if you work with several layers, you can decrease the opacity of the layer for more precise results.

Start with a basic greenish flesh tone and paint the texture with different tones and at a low Opacity. For a very 80s touch, apply warm and cold lights. It's a good idea to add several light sources because these give volumes greater definition. For the background and the lights, I use the Soft Round brush on a very low Opacity. I only need an hour to finish my zombie. If you want to create something quickly, work at full size rather than zooming in and out all the time!



As you can see, my brush strokes are very rough and not very precise.

Question
How can I use watercolours to make my manga characters look more realistic?
Inch Sun, Singapore



Answer
Kai replies



Watercolours have an innate texture that helps create a living atmosphere. This illustration is a scene from a fairy tale I'm writing. It's a dark and sad story about a prince who's imprisoned in a pond. The colours that I've chosen support the mood of this story: they're defining the impressions of time, flow and silence. The greens aren't saturated and range from olive to violet. The balance of warm and cold colours is important. I use crimson red and ochre tones both for his skin and as hints in the background.

Don't use too many colours in your art because the image will end up unbalanced. A realistic painting is about giving a life-like impression. To maintain the manga feel, I strike a balance between applying a flattened, cartoon-like colouration and giving depth to the painting.

You should also bear in mind where the light source is coming from. Compose your image according to the light and shadow.

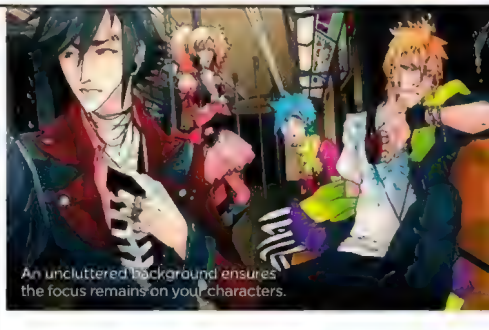
Question
What's the right way to approach a scene featuring multiple characters?
Debbie McCluskey, Scotland

Answer
Christy replies



It's important to be able to guide the viewer through the image, so their eye will linger on each character before moving on to the next. Using a composition that has strong lines – be they diagonals, horizontals, or verticals connecting the characters in some way – is the easiest way to make sure no one gets overlooked.

Using colour to keep your characters from blending into the background is also very important. Don't use similar colour schemes in the foreground and the background – for example, avoid lots of cool colours, or a monochromatic palette. Changing up the painting style on the figures and the background is also an effective tool. If you can use it, spot lighting focused on the figures is an effective trick.



Question
Please help me create a manga-style monster

Jolyon Florence, US



Here are some stylistic directions that you could use for your design.

Answer
Saskia replies



When looking through various manga titles I've noticed that you'll often either find a cartoon-like monster, or more realistic creatures that could come straight out of a classic fantasy illustration. It depends on your intention: is your monster supposed to gain sympathy, or do you want to set up a scary antagonist?

Generally, if you want to paint a monster that people can relate to it's wise to make it appealing by adding soft forms. For example, Pokémon's strongest monsters are still cute and cartoony looking. If you want to create a more humanoid creature, things can become a bit tricky. Despite having a human-like appearance it has to be recognisable as a creature. The trick is to simplify and reduce your creature's face to its key elements. For example, if you have a humanised wolf you could keep the long nose and the general skull structure, but work in human expressions.

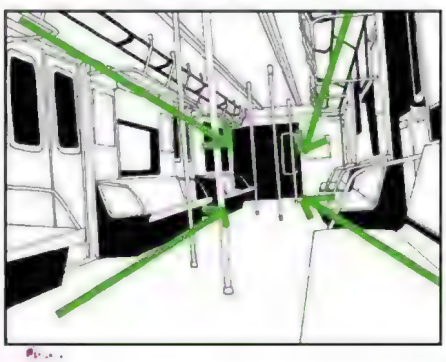
It's important to do your research first, especially if you go for a more realistic approach or if your creature is based on a real-world animal. Ensure you do a few studies to get a feeling for the animal's prominent features. Once you have a bit of basic knowledge you can abstract as much as you like.

Artist's secret

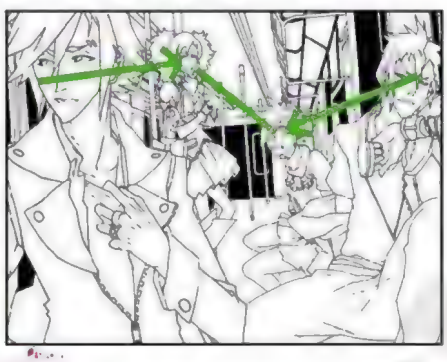
A ROUGH OUTLINE

Choose the outlines carefully to emphasise the nature of your monster. Use round and fluffy forms for monsters that are supposed to engage the viewer sympathy, and hard edges for dangerous creature. This trick is often used in animation and comics.

Step-by-step: Fill your environment with figures



1 I start laying out the background with strong lines on either side, as defined by the subway walls. There are a few verticals created by the poles, but the figures will be in front of them so as not to break up the horizontals that are made by the figures.



2 The next step is to make sure the viewer's eye flows from one character to another. In this case all of the characters are equally important, so I make sure their heads are lined up on diagonals. This means the eye naturally follows from one to the other without stopping.



3 The characters are going to be colourful, so I stick to neutral/warm tones as much as I can for the background, to make sure they pop out. When you have a complex background it's crucial to keep the colours simple so they don't overwhelm the characters.

Question
I want to add a Visual-kei aesthetic to my manga art – how do I do this?

Wilhelm Gregor, Germany


Beneath the hair and glamour is a very harmonious look.

Answer
Kai replies



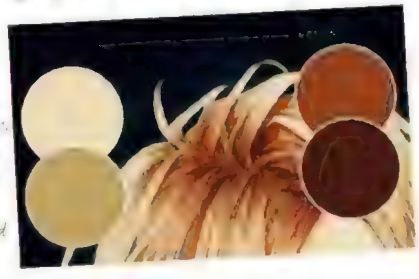
To accompany my answer I've chosen to draw Kyouya, who is the original character of a Visual-kei music project I'm starting with a friend. We want to use a drawn manga character as an avatar and produce real music under Kyouya's name.

V-kei includes very different styles, which are inspired by various fashion trends. But all of them have to be eye-catching! Out of personal preferences I love to draw a hard-rock and host style-inspired fashion. This includes extensive use of leather materials, chains and silver accessories. People sometimes tend to overuse these elements, so you have to bear in mind what the final image will look like. Channel your inner fashion designer! Don't just wildly throw different details together, though. Visual-kei fashion has a very harmonic look, even if it doesn't look like it at first.

For the past five years I've been working as a model for V-kei fashion in magazines and on events. Occasionally I've worked with my friend, who is the designer of a Japanese fashion brand, to create unique costumes. This experience has helped me understand the spirit and depths of this unusual fashion trend. For my painting I prefer to do it all traditionally, using the nib pen and ink to outline the drawing and watercolours for the colouring stage.

Artist's secret

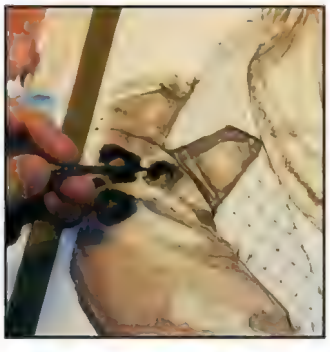
PAINT AUTHENTIC V-KEI HAIR



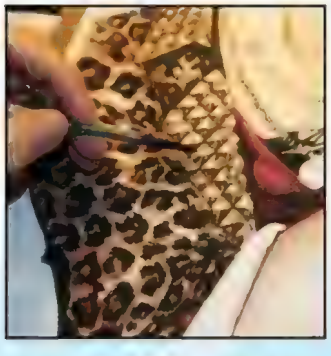
Step-by-step: Paint a Visual-kei character



1 I'm aiming for Visual-kei, rather than a straight gothic look, so I chose a yellow-black colour palette instead of all black, with a couple of red highlights. The warm colours work well for blond hair. Note that the final image has to work with all the elements. I prefer to limit the colour palette to two or three colours. The hues are inspired by the leopard print pattern!



2 I start painting the jacket with a bright base colour, which will be transformed into leopard print. I use a muted yellow-brown colour and define the shadows and highlights before applying the pattern. For the black stains I use a wet-in-wet watercolour technique and let the colour bleed into the small circles. This keeps the pattern looking natural and every stain unique.

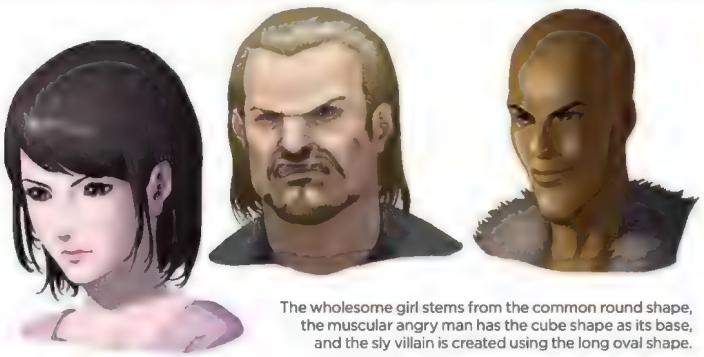


3 The golden pyramid studs are definitely 'in' at the moment and you can find it in many designs! After I finish the jacket I paint the shiny metal. During this stage you have to be very careful about the light direction and define every surface of the pyramids accordingly. Bear in mind that the shadow side is not just black, but also reflects the light. Patience is key!



4 Finally, I render the silver jewellery and the leather wristband. There are no limits to your fantasy character and his costume! I like realistically painting the accessories and therefore I define every chain link. Visual-kei characters tend to use a lot of silver and black jewellery. I've found that it's a good idea to make the accessories contrast with the rest of the image.

Question
How can I give my character an interesting, distinct look?
Joyce Letha, England



The wholesome girl stems from the common round shape, the muscular angry man has the cube shape as its base, and the sly villain is created using the long oval shape.

Answer
Chris replies



When designing a character, the first thing that I think about is the overall silhouette of the figure, including its posture, which depicts attitude. The most important part is the head and the face, which give your character soul – it's where most people look first.

To create an interesting character, you have to depict a suitable skull shape and facial expression. The silhouette of the head is fun to play with, and it can help tell a story or give the impression of a particular character to the viewer. Pay attention to your friends' skulls: different head shapes in combination with their facial features build up the first impression of that person.

I experiment with three basic skull shapes, and create the second image from those shapes, applying specific expressions and lighting to further enhance the characteristics. Feel free to exaggerate the shape of the skull if you want to emphasise its characteristics. Use its expression to give a rough idea of what the character's doing or what kind of posture they've assumed, so you can think more about their mindset.



A round shape is used for most characters. A cube is used as a base for a bulky, chiselled character. A longer oval shape can be used for a character who is tall and skinny.

Artist's secret

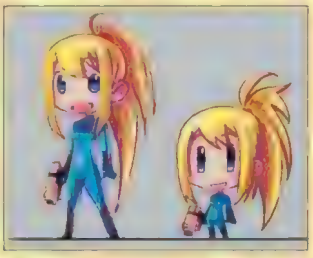
MIX IT UP

Sometimes I play around and mix up shape, to create more interesting head shapes to fit the characters, such as using a triangle with a small sphere above it to create an orc-like creature with a small brain and big jaw. Messing around with funny skull shapes that you see in real life and use your imagination to create something from. Remember that using a unique skull creates contrast and helps the viewer recognise the character.

Question
Can you define Chibi manga, and how do I go about painting it?
Larry Hildred, US



Focus on shape play and proportions when drawing Chibi characters.



By adjusting parts you can change a figure from 'Cute' to 'Oh mah God!' adorable.

Answer
Rob replies



Chibi is the super-deformed style of drawing characters with oversized heads or child versions of characters. You want to start out with a character who's normally six or seven heads high and reduce them to somewhere between three and one-and-a-half heads high, with their head being making up the largest part of the character. Remember: the smaller the body, the cuter the Chibi.

You can mix and match parts as well, including facial styles from big anime eyes to button-style faces, with either proportionate bodies or tiny lower halves. Don't worry about intricate details, because they're usually too tiny to bother with.

Chibis aren't just for human characters, either: the style can be used for animals, robots, vehicles and food as well. If you're drawing manga, it's a great way to liven up the mood and reveal emotions.

Question
How do I depict three dimensions in black and white manga?
Daithi Fionnbarra, Ireland

Answer
Christy replies



Think of it as if you were working with three basic tones: highlight, (pure white), shadow (pure black) and midtone (grey tone/crosshatching/greyscale). There can be several midtones, different tones, hatching or greyscale used to differentiate textures or colours, but if you're using your white and black tones correctly then they're not always necessary.

Keep in mind where your light source is and paint in the solid blacks first. Spot blacks should be wherever light doesn't hit. After that greyscale can be used to expand shadows, add lighter shadows or to create a different sort of shadowing, such as hair or clothing. White can either be created by using the blank canvas or by adding it back in later for highlights. Don't be afraid to build and subtract as needed!



Here you can see that the drop shadow on fabric is a hatching, the leather has a shine and the heavy shadows are solid black.



The light source is overhead and behind the figure, so the underside and frontside of things receive solid spot blacks.

Question
I need some ideas on creating a Gundam girl. Can you help?
Baptiste Marcellin, France



I prefer to design outfits in colour, then build my construction shapes on top of that.

Answer
Rob replies



Gundam girls refer to drawing young girls or ladies in body armour that resembles Mobile Suits. Think of it like cosplay, but with mecha armour.

Start with a basic female pose, working your construction and silhouette out normally, then add armour and accessories. Lots of reference will help out on the particulars, so refer to Google for research purposes. Keep your shapes as three dimensional as possible, and if you struggle with construction, try referencing real Gundam model kits instead of drawings.

When designing, think of the mech heads as possible hats or headband accessories. Weapons could easily become purses or backpacks, and robotic legs large boots or shoes. Realistic or fun – the balance between sexy and deadly is the focus, with specific Gundam details accentuating the attitude of your design. Even though my version is very mecha, she easily could have just been wearing a dress that resembled aspects of the Gundam reference.

Question
How do I go about creating manga-style expressions?
Rod Carson, Scotland



As long as you draw the key elements such as eyes, eyebrows and the mouth carefully, you can display complex emotions using a simple painting style.

Answer
Saskia replies



Most traditional manga works with a simple style that's based on classical rules of art. In the end you're always going to have more artistic freedom by having a strong knowledge of what you're simplifying, so pay attention to those anatomy books.

Exaggeration is the key to getting the right expression. The stronger the emotion, the more you can exaggerate it. Look out for the key elements that make up the emotion. The most important things to emphasise are the eyebrows and eyes, because these are the first things your eyes are drawn towards, and they're crucial for displaying any emotion. If you're unsure, observe your own face in a mirror or take digital photos while you mimic some facial expressions, and use this for inspiration.



Be careful with the eyebrows – they can make a crucial difference between several expressions.



Next month
ON SALE: **26 April**
How to draw a unique version of Cthulhu

Question
How can I adopt manga-style elements into my portrait art?
Ben Will, England

Answer
Serge replies



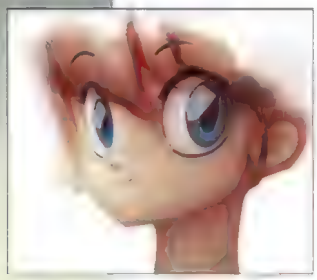
Painting a realistic manga character isn't easy because the volumes aren't logical. For example, the eyes are totally flat. The best approach is to cheat and use more human-like shapes. Try to find good references such as vinyl figures or dolls, but bear in mind that it doesn't have to be exclusively plastic in nature. Think about your light sources first, which will help you find your palette and define your volumes.

When you have to deal with realism, the most important problem to solve is the contrast. Try to avoid pure white and pure black – I usually spend a lot of time on this. To achieve a smooth result, I work with the Soft Round brush on a very low opacity. Apply a lot of very light strokes, use a larger brush for bigger areas and a small one for detailing. I use a lot of layers: one for each element of the eyes, nose, month and eyebrows.

For the flesh tones, your palette has to be more complex than a simple gradient. Add a little bit of red on the nose and the cheek bones, a little bit of green on the shadows, and a little bit of blue/cyan under the eyes. The hair is the boring part. Start with a flat very dark area and paint hair strands individually. It'll take a few hours, but if you want to achieve convincing results, you need to invest the time!



Here's a very flat face with giant occular globes. It would be difficult to sculpt this in 3D, but manga is 2D, so we can cheat!



My first attempt to paint a realistic manga head looks more like a vinyl figure. It's impossible to paint logical volumes for the eyes!

Artist's secret

PAINTING SKIN TEXTURE

Add skin texture with a textured brush, work at one luminosity in Photoshop. Apply some texture with a small soft Round brush. Working on a different layer enable you to decrease the opacity of the layer for more efficient image adjustments.

Step-by-step: Bring a manga character to life

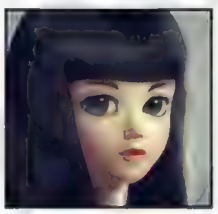
1 Here's my quick sketch. I don't spend a lot of time on it because when you try to achieve realistic rendering, it's often pointless. It's all about volumes, not lines. Just try to define the composition and the proportions. Digital painting software gives you a lot of freedom – you can change everything in your picture very easily. Take advantage of it!



2 The face is the most time-consuming part of the process. I start with a flesh-toned flat area on a layer, then define the volumes gradually with the Soft Round brush on other layers. I need to do a lot of strokes. My sketch is still on the top layer, and I increase or decrease its opacity when necessary. By the time I've finished, the sketch will no longer be visible.



3 I use the same method for the hair. Straight and dark hair isn't particularly difficult to paint . First I create a very dark-tinted area and then on another layer, I define the global volume. Then I paint in all the small hairs and I add the reflections using the background colour and white. Once again, I used the Soft Round brush on a very low opacity.



Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at **help@imaginefx.com** or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**



UNEARTHING MECH ART SECRETS

There's a lot more to mecha than giant robots stomping off to war. We quiz some leading professional artists on what it takes to paint the perfect mech





ROBOTECH



BERZERKER

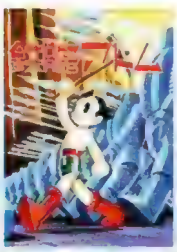




LIC FORMERS

THE 10 MOST INSPIRING MECHA CREATIONS

If you're new to mechs, here are our picks of the most influential takes on the genre



Astro Boy
The first mecha and arguably the first manga too, Tetsuwan Atomu appeared on Japanese newsstands in 1952 drawn by the legendary Osamu Tezuka. He appeared in three animated TV series, a big-budget film, and in various translated comic books globally.



Tetsujin 28-go
Created in 1956 by Mitsutero Yokoyama, Tetsujin 28-go first appeared as a manga strip. The title translates as Iron Man number 28 and features a giant robot controlled by a small boy. In the early 1963, the animated version appeared in the US as Gigantor.



Mazinger Z
Go Nagai wrote and illustrated this early manga that featured super giant robots controlled by human pilots. It first appeared in 1972 and soon became a popular anime TV series in Japan. The enormous Mazinger Z is made of a rare metal only found in Mount Fuji.

MECH MAYHEM IN GAMES

Concept artist John Park talks about designing mechs for the online game Hawken

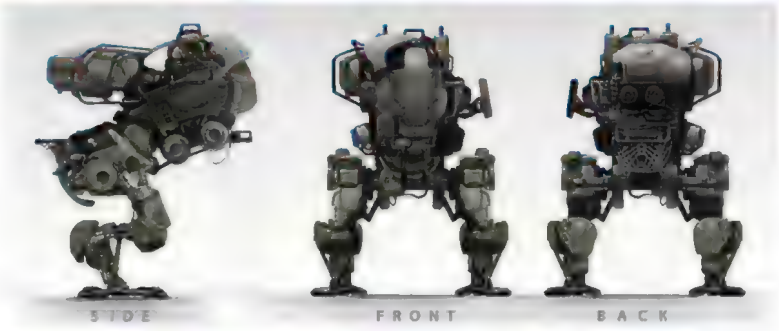


From Metal Gear Solid to the Armored Core series, there's nothing like being able to pilot your own mech in a console game, or taking one on in a fight. Hawken is one of the latest titles, and its mechs were designed by John Park and the creative team at Adhesive Games.

"What makes an interesting mech design is the believability and the purpose of the design," John says. "There are so many designs that are visually intriguing, but not enough that are functionally convincing. I always look for the mechanical elements, and purpose. Why does this mech exist, outside of having attached machine guns and killing a large human population?"

Working with Khang Le, Miles Williams and Darren Qauch, John wanted Hawken's mechs to have their own visual language. "The visual language was a hybrid between a World War I aesthetic and Japanese mechs. We also wanted to make the mechs to feel very kit-bashed, as if they had been roughly assembled," he says.

www.jparked.cghub.com





CONCEPT MECH

In the 2D phase, drawings of the mechs were created by hand, then worked up in Photoshop.

MECH MODEL

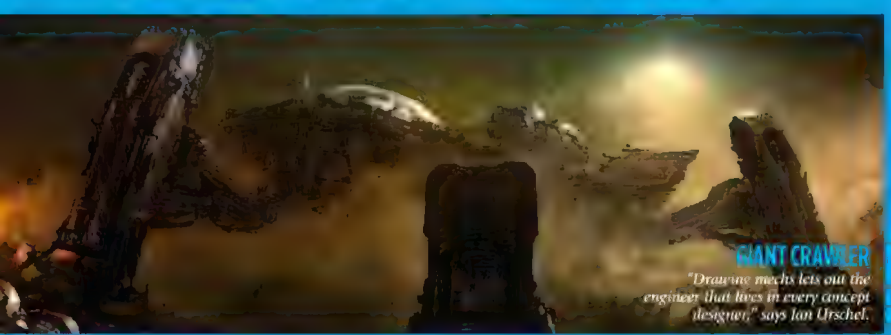
John's mech artwork was then modelled, textured and rendered in 3D, to be deployed in the game's expansive environment.

> "Once I saw Evangelion I forgot everything else. There's an organic feel to the mechs that I found interesting"

IT BEGAN IN JAPAN...

BATTLE GEAR





GIANT CRAWLER

"Drawing mechs lets out the engineer that lives in every concept designer," says Ian Urschel.

ARTIST TIP

Ian Urschel

COUNTRY: Singapore

JOB: Concept artist

TIP: As with any large-scale objects, high-density detail and atmosphere are key. I think it is important to hit the sweet spot between reality and the made-up. Too real and it might look boring, too fake and it won't be believable.

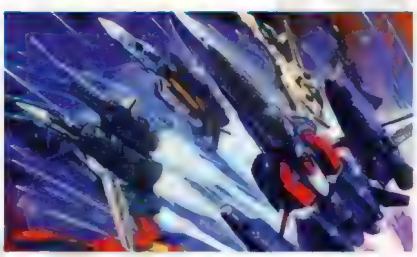
www.CRLY/jurschel





Mobile Suit Gundam

First airing on Japanese TV in 1979, Mobile Suit Gundam gave rise to a trademark that today is worth well over $500 million. Yoshiyuki Tomino's franchise features huge, heavily armed robots that are piloted from inside the torso with a camera in the head, and a variety of weapons on the arms.



Macross

The Macross franchise began with the anime work of Shoji Kawamori at Studio Nue in 1982 and went on to become a global phenomenon. The story features jet fighters that can turn into humanoid robots. The animation and the toys that it gave rise to formed the seed of the Robotech series in the west.

TWO RULES TO MECH DESIGN

As a leading artist for film and video games, Daryl Mandryk has designed plenty of mechs. Here are his two rules to follow...



"Two big things I always think about when drawing robots is their function and their environment," outlines mech enthusiast Daryl Mandryk. The artist says he always wants his mech's function to be clear to the viewer: whether it's an assault mech or a medical droid, the art needs to convey the function the machine has been designed for. "These things were constructed by someone or something with a specific purpose in mind," he adds.

Daryl believes that the environment the mech exists in can help make it believable as well. "Show that it inhabits its world. Is it brand new? Has it been out in the field for a while? Is it on its last legs? Those kinds of questions can greatly affect the look of your final design."

www.mandrykart.wordpress.com



ROBO SKETCH

> Mechs are characters in much the same way that a car can have a specific look and feel to it

ARTIST TIP

Matt Moylan

COUNTRY: Canada

JOB: Concept artist

TIP: I think some of the best designs incorporate some realistic elements, or even make you believe it could really exist. Macross' original VF-1 Valkyrie is a great example. It's a jet that turns into a robot, which is ridiculous. But they did such a great job.

FUNCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY



THE 10 MOST INSPIRING MECHA CREATIONS CONTINUED



Transformers

It's hard to believe that it's nearly 30 years since Hasbro and Takara Tomy launched the toys that saw cars, trucks and aeroplanes genuinely transform into fighting robots. Marvel launched a comic based on the toys in 1984, which ran alongside an animated TV series.



Appleseed

Beginning in 1985, Masamune Shirow's well-received Appleseed fused cyberpunk and mecha in its depiction of a 22nd century world and the adventures of two special weapons experts in a post-apocalyptic civilisation where half the people are half-robot.



Ghost in the Shell

First appearing in 1989 as a manga, and later as anime, Ghost in the Shell is referenced by many of today's mecha artists for its depiction of an increasingly cybernetic world, with cyborg protagonist Major Motoko Kusanagi leading a crack counterterrorist squad.

ALEX JAEGER

His mech artwork proves to be an inspiration in the concept art world



'From a steam-powered giant spider in Wild Wild West to Bumblebee's head in Dark of the Moon, Alex Jaeger is a leading Hollywood concept designer, and he likes making mechs. In fact, he loves them so much that he created several of his own bespoke JAEGERTECH models for the book Nuthin' But Mech. We asked him about his projects and his approach...

What are you working on at the moment?
I'm the VFX art director on Pacific Rim and have had a major hand in the final look of that film's many giant mechs – which just happen to be called Jaegers. Director Guillermo Del Toro (GDT) and his artists did the initial designs, but translating those illustrations into working, believable machines and creatures that live in highly detailed live-action plates is what I was tasked with. Like most projects, this involved redesigning parts, figuring out joints, damage, paint and materials, and even lighting of these mammoth mechs. As the VFX art director I also worked closely with GDT on achieving what he called 'mech porn', which is when the camera holds on the machinery and its movements to show the audience the massive scale and detail that went into the Jaegers.

What media do you use?
I mainly use Sketchbook Pro for sketching, Modo for 3D, and Photoshop for details.

What are the key ingredients that make a great piece of mecha artwork?
As someone with a transportation design background, I love the more simple designs. Like a good piece of art, a good design should move the eye to places of interest and also give the eye a place to rest to read the forms. I prefer something with broad clean surfaces and areas or cut outs with pockets of detail and a twist of the overall form to keep it fresh, such as a different layout than the human form, or a two-legged gun platform.

Which other artists have inspired you?
Growing up in 80s, my influences include Ralph McQuarrie's AT-AT walkers and Joe Johnston's Star Wars sketches – mainly because back then there was hardly any printed material of such work and the internet was not yet a thing. The shots of those imperial walkers ignited my imagination to the possibilities of incredible designs doing credible actions. Syd Mead's overall design aesthetic also influenced me greatly in my school years. I loved the themes to his designs and his thoughts behind how they would work in the world they were designed for.

Are you inspired by Japanese mecha?
I'm an anime fan when it comes to mech design. Macross/Robotech, Bubblegum Crisis, Gundam, MadOX, Appleseed, Ghost in the Shell and Evangelion are excellent examples of Japanese mech designs. Evangelion is a bit special due to the scale and nature of designs. The Evas aren't totally mechanical – they're living beings contained in a mech suit, which enables them to break the typical mould of heavy armour and clunky joints. They're also slick and fast – I call them the Lamborghini of mechs!
www.alxartblog.blogspot.co.uk

THE FRS-32R

One of Alex Jaeger's personal favourites is his racing mech. For consistency, he designed the body panels first and then the legs, which are like smaller iterations of the body armour.



THE DRONE

The TR-3xT6 is a recon and security drone mech with a slicker more consumer friendly design with the option of being weaponised.



BEST FORM OF DEFENSE

The GN-001xi is from JAEGERTECH's defensive division, and is a best seller – it's a six-legged walking tank with robust armour and Robotech-inspired panels.



Neon Genesis Evangelion

Directed by Hideake Anno, with artwork by Yoshiyuki Sadamoto, the Evangelion series began in 1995. It not only has the most sophisticated and philosophical set of themes of any mecha anime, but arguably the finest artwork, with the cybernetic Eva and Angel mechs.



Metal Gear Solid

Many computer games are based on mechs, but perhaps the most influential is Metal Gear Solid which appeared in 1998. Its main character Snake Solid is tasked with taking down an organisation armed with nuclear-powered mechs – the Metal Gear REX.

SUPER DEFORMED

When Matt Moylan draws a mech he likes to go well beyond dynamic posing...



He's a proponent of the super-deformed 'Chibi' approach to manga and mecha. His Lil Formers series began as a spoof of Transformers but has a strong following. "Drawing super-deformed robots is more forgiving than being a realistic mecha artist. I guess it's the mecha equivalent of being a cartoonist versus being an illustrator. You can cheat the designs with extra curvy parts or oversized parts that wouldn't fit together, for the purposes of making them cuter. I know my own characters get pretty marshmallowy sometimes! It's also fun to take existing mecha designs and convert them down to SD proportions. Because you're simplifying the design, you have to decide what are the core elements that make that design identifiable. It might be a unique head shape, a strong colour scheme, a few bits of kibble-tech that stick out from the body, or all of those things." **www.lilformers.com/blog**



MEGAMAN
A collection of mech-inspired characters from Matt Moylan's super deformed artworks.



STEEL SERPENT
Lorin Wood takes inspiration from nature, as seen in this undersea snake image created for the book Nuthin' But Mech.



SKINNY BOT
Mohammad Hossein Attaran wanted to create something inspired by a bony face structure. In general, the artist is inspired by mechanical parts and their assembly.



"I start with a flat brush to sketch the layout and lighting. Then I use different texture brushes and balance the colours and levels on the final key using references from nature," says Reza Ilyasa, explaining his process.

glass shards, old machines, even tall distant objects all inspire me," says the artist who quit the comic industry to focus on illustrating mechs for a living. "The sense of strength of the metal itself, combined with sharp shapes and straight lines, the function of gears and animatic elements, curved lines and a striking silhouette all help make the design eye-catching."

The Iranian illustrator and animator Mohammad Hossein Attaran bases his mech designs around mechanical elements that can be observed in the real world. He's



filled his sketchbooks with everything from architecture to engine parts, and studied mechanical engineering until his love of art took over. A real-world basis is something that makes his robotic characters seem believable

> "If you can't detect real mechanical parts in my work, then I haven't achieved my goal"

ARTIST TIP

Thet Stylianides

COUNTRY: England
JOB: Concept artist
TIP: Do your research, think of it logically and never be afraid to explore ideas. Oh, and have fun with it! There's a sense of freedom to explore lots of crazy ideas that you might not be able to in different areas of design.
www.bit.ly/thet-s

"Whenever I see something mechanical like an engine or even car parts, for example, I keep staring at them for a while, or I take pictures to investigate later," Mohammad explains. "Obviously, the major ingredients in my artwork are mechanical parts from the real world. If you can't detect them in my work, it means that I haven't achieved my goal."

Of course, a good mech needs to feel futuristic too. Concept artist Walter Kim,



based in Los Angeles, has designed both robotic characters and walking tank mechs. For him it's not so much about picturing your mech being built now, but certainly in the future. When Walter approaches a piece, he imagines the kinds of things military science labs might dream up – perhaps employing rare substances or innovative new propulsion units or weapons. He

SKETCHING UP A ROVBOT

Lorin Wood gave this mech a low-key and casual feel...

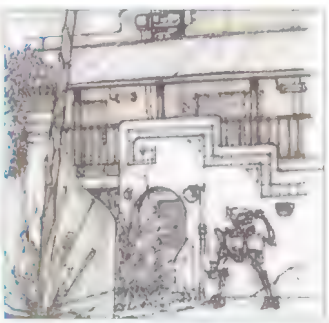


The concept artist painted this image for the new book Nuthin' But Mech. Normally a robot walking around might catch your eye, but in the future it might just be a mundane object like a rubbish bin. Here the artist describes his process.



Visualise a composition

"The sketch was a warm-toned 30 per cent marker to find the composition I wanted – the composition was the result from the book layout. We were restricted to a relatively narrow, vertical page."



Choose a unique setting

"I wanted something more intimate and less grand than is the norm for sci-fi. This is a sleepy town, but details like the robot and the high-tech antennae on the roof insinuate that there's greater scale to the world."



Paint in Photoshop

"The final stage was a Photoshop underpainting of the line art to drop in values, and then phototextures and painting on top. I wasn't interested in a polished rendering, I wanted the line and marker work to show through."



SKELETON STUFF
Quebec-based freelance artist Ruan Jia believes that the secret to a mech is working it on the skeleton.



ROBOTECH JETS
Robotech features aircraft that change into humanoid fighters, as seen in this piece by Omar D

also likes to draw the viewer in by giving them the chance to imagine driving the mech themselves.

For freelance artist Ruan Jia, the key to great mechs isn't high futuristic concepts,



but perfecting the basics. "My mech design is 90 per cent line work – I put all my energy into this so even if the colour is messy, it's going to look good." With the skeleton in place when it comes to adding the armour and colour sometimes Ruan will use cubes or circular arcs. "As long as the line drawing is solid, I'm free to create anything."

THE COOL FACTOR

"Mech design has to have a cool factor, something that's going to make the viewer want to either pilot the mech or want to see what it can do," Walter reminds us. "How the mech works is also important. For example, how do the arms work and what drives them, what types of technology are being used, where would the pilot sit, and how these elements are integrated together to bring about the complete design."



FIRE POWER
Geoffroy Thoorens: "I tried to keep a square shape guideline with a slight influence of Japan designs.



TANK WALKER
Concept artist Walter Kim creates characters and futuristic military hardware. He's inspired by the Japanese mecha manga Ghost in the Shell.

> "Mechs have at least one appendage or gun pointed at the viewer"

Believable design can make your mech compelling, but many artists advise against becoming a slave to realism. Some of Omar's inspiration comes from the mechs of the 1980s – Transformers, Robotech, Go-Bots and Voltron – and he's studied how they were posed. If you're drawing a mech comic, he believes you have to push your mech beyond what might be physically possible if it were a manufactured robot that you can manipulate into certain poses.

"After talking to many of my pro friends who draw mechs, we found a trend in how they're posed – they have at least one appendage or gun pointed at the viewer. Check and see, it's textbook stuff," Omar says. "To pose them in a cool and dynamic way, you have to 'break' them, colliding and overlapping certain parts. Take a Transformer and try to pose him like what you see on the cover of a book or comic. You'll see that you can't get even the most articulated model to do it. So there's an element of cheating in the pose!"

ARTIST TIP

Alex Jaeger
COUNTRY: US
JOB: Concept artist
TIP: Know what you can work with before diving into any major artwork. Master your general information, before pursuing alterations, or adding fictional elements. Know the object from all angles and you'll be able to make it work for you.
www.bit.ly/[illegible]

MECH BOOKS TO TRY

Get inspired and learn new techniques to paint your mechs with these books

Evangelion Chronicles: Illustrations



Published by UDON Entertainment under license from Gainax Studios, this book collects together over 100 pieces of Evangelion artwork including mechs, characters and stills from the anime. Many pages feature just one artwork, giving you the chance to check out the designs in detail. There are comments and quotes from the artists too.
www.udonentertainment.com/blog

Nuthin' But Mech



Some of the finest concept artists in the world have contributed to the Nuthin' But Mech project, each creating their own personal piece for the book. Inside you'll find great work from the likes of Dylan Cole, Feng Zhu, Ian McQue, Pascal Blanche, Alex Jaeger and Lorin Wood.
www.nuthinbutmech.blogspot.co.uk

A Brief History of Manga



The next book from manga expert Helen McCarthy isn't out until September but it's worth pre-ordering your copy today. In it she'll be looking at mecha and the many other strains of manga, drawing on her many Japanese contacts for inside information.
www.bit.ly/hmccarthy

CONCEPT AND PAINT YOUR MECH

Martin Deschambault shares his process and approach to designing an interesting mech



"A successful mech design has a good sense of mechanical design, silhouette and personality," says Martin Deschambault, artist behind Project 77 (**www.dechambo.com**).

With so many mech designs around, it can be hard to find something new to design and say with your mech art. The best way is to find new refreshing inspirations and adapt them into your own style and approach.

"The inspiration is everywhere," says Martin, "in nature, animals, vehicles and certainly in other mech designs." But, he adds, "try not to look at too many other mech designs on the web."



1 Silhouette

When I begin a new design, I start with a black and white silhouette sketch. When I find something interesting, I think about the mechanical aspect: for example, how does it move, what's the main purpose of this mech, and what materials is it made out of? I always try to find new references when I start to add the details.

2 Keep it grounded

During the early stages I constantly look at robotics and the mechanical design. The evolution of robotic technology is taking place so rapidly that there are always some new and interesting designs emerging. It's good to keep track of them, so that the mech design remains grounded in reality.

3 Retain the shapes

I always look for a clear silhouette and proportions, so while I keep to the original sketch and shapes as I paint, I still look to develop the design as I go, searching to find new inspiration. I look at real-world mechanical and robotic designs and try to make my mech fit a job or purpose.

4 Fit for your world

I finish up the details during this stage, adding highlights and seeing how I can fit this mech into my world. The good thing with Project 77 is that I can change the overall look of my design because it's a very broad universe and I want diversity. However, the mechanical and plausible look is always important for me – this why I come up with crazy and interesting shapes.

5 Final painting

The mech is finished, and careful attention to its shape, silhouette and purpose means that it fits nicely in the Project 77 world I'm creating.



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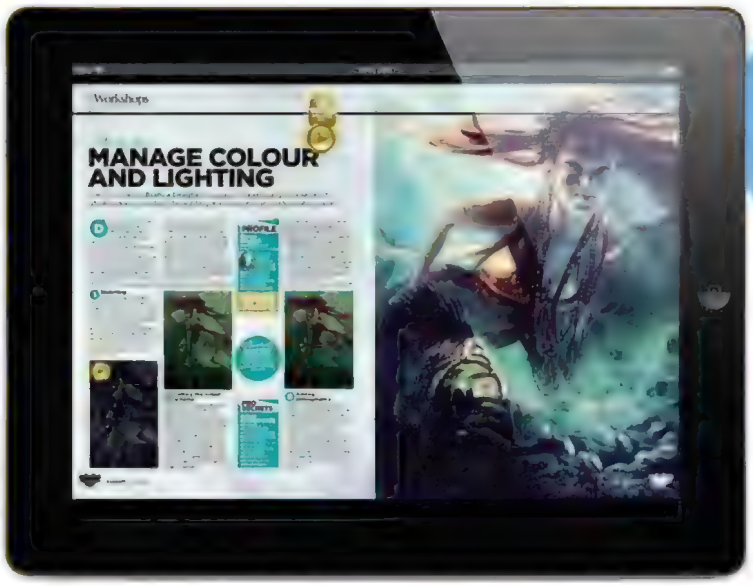
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Issue 89 December 2012



Our game art special includes some of the world's leading video game artists. There's Remko Troost on Assassin's Creed 3, Hoyjin Ahn reveals Guild Wars 2 techniques and John Park discusses HAWKEN. Epic Games's Shane Pierce explores the art of Gears of War and we visit Ubisoft.

Issue 90 Christmas 2012



In our Blizzard issue, the video game publishers give us the green light to show off new art from Alex Ross, Simon Bisley, Syd Mead, Alex Horley, Paul Bonner, Craig Mullins and other great artists. Sam Didier paints a Warcraft-StarCraft mash-up, and Laurel D Austin composes spiky alien characters.

Issue 91 January 2013



In our Tolkien special we talk to artists John Howe and Alan Lee about making The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey, while workshops feature Gollum, Éowyn's battle with the Witch-king, and Corrado Vanelli's Middle-earth elf queen. Elsewhere, Donato Giancola shares his treasured techniques.

Issue 92 February 2013



Combine 2D and 3D in your art, improve your backgrounds, mix up your fantasy genres, master backlighting... these are just some of the techniques that you can learn in this month's packed issue. We also talk to Adrian Smith and Edward Howard about their inspirational fantasy art.

Issue 93 March 2013



In our sci-fi special, Admira Wijaya designs believable mechs, Serge Birault paints a Barbarella pin-up, Clint Cearley creates a mechanical wizard and Nick Harris tries to put goblins in space with SketchBook Pro. We also have an interview with delightfully eccentric artist Ian Miller.

Issue 94 April 2013



Our workshop artists will give your anatomy skills a real boost this month. Cover artist David Gaillet, teacher Charles Hu and ex-Disney artist John Watkiss all endeavour to sharpen your figure drawing techniques. And Corrado Vanelli helps you depict better faces in Corel Painter.

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Jago Silver

The children's book illustrator explains how the freedom of digital sketching can yield unexpected results

Artist PROFILE

Jago Silver
COUNTRY: England



Based in Cornwall, Jago is an award-winning artist who has been illustrating children's books for over 10 years. He works entirely with digital forms, switching between an iMac, a Cintiq and an iPad. Jago has also recently begun lecturing on digital visualisation at Truro College, specialising in digital drawing techniques. He shares a strong interest in character design and concept art with his students.
Web: www.jagoillustration.com



FACE PAINTING
"I find that these kinds of sketches are a great way to practise painting techniques."

WOLVES

"I tend to use Photoshop to sketch out my ideas."



PIRATES

"I've been trying to produce a lot of daily sketches, focusing on what I feel I'm worst at: faces."



"I tend to use Photoshop to sketch out my ideas"



FOUR HEADS

"Sometimes I'll work a sketch through to a finished colour illustration, other times I'll just try and produce as many as I can, or concentrate on expressions."

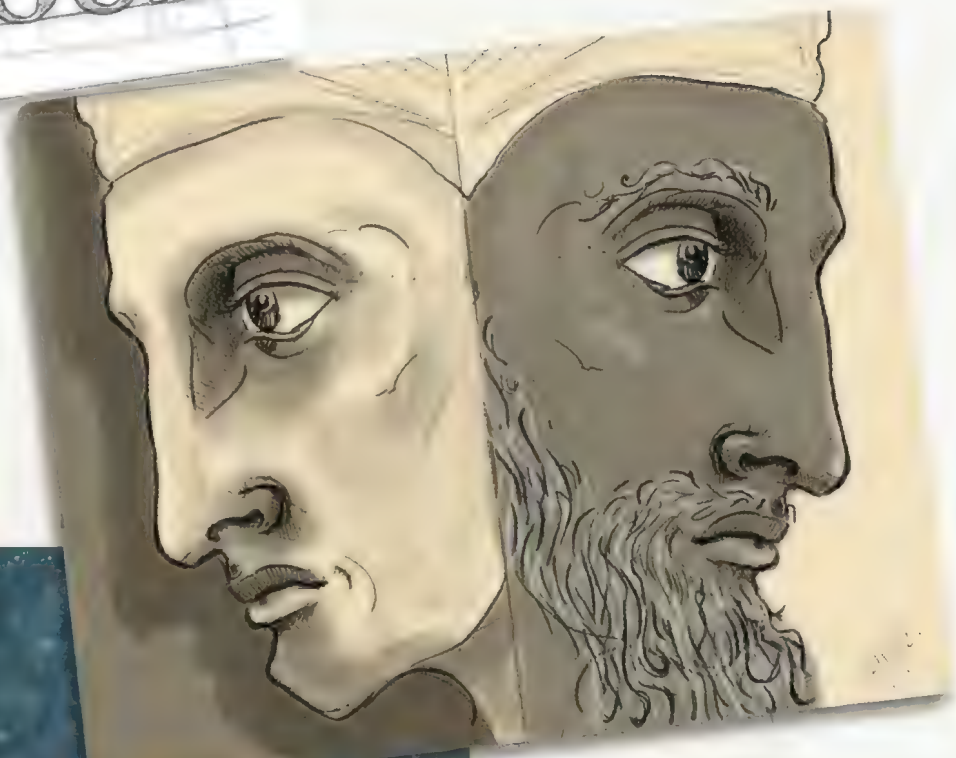


COLLEGE TUTORIAL

"This is an example used in class for my students, showing a technique for building up an illustration in layers."

Sketchbook

"I'm starting to use the iPad more and more as a digital sketchpad"



THE BIGGEST TREE IN THE WORLD

"An in-progress stage of a class exercise to illustrate an exaggerated world record. I chose to illustrate the world's biggest tree."



TWO VERSIONS OF ONE HEAD

"Here, I wanted to create two versions of the same sketch with slightly different details."

IAN MCKELLAN (SORT OF)

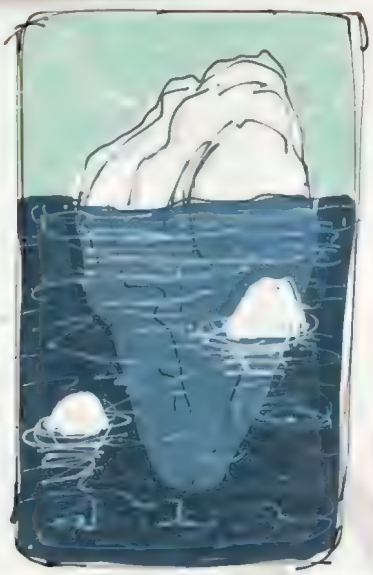
"This sketch was initially based on a photo of Sir Ian McKellan but took on a life of its own. I later added colours and textures."

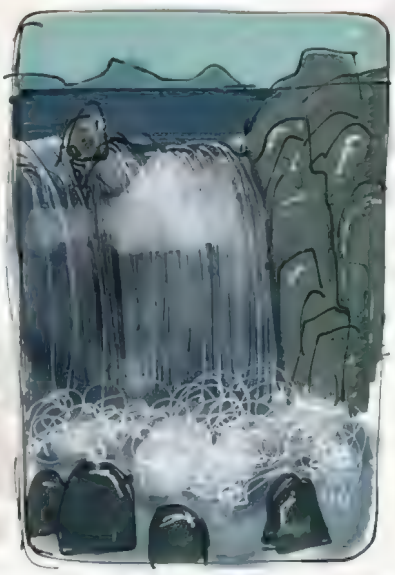




HEAD SKETCHES

"One of the first sketches I made, in 2013, trying out a few new techniques."





ICEBERGS & WATERFALLS

"These are iPad sketches. I'm starting to use this more and more as a digital sketchpad; the Brushes app and Paper by FiftyThree are my favourites."

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ASTONISHING X-MEN
One of Simone's team theme images for the Astonishing X-Men comics. Close

Astonishing X-Men © 2007 Marvel

SIMONE BIANCHI

He's redesigned Asgard, created new villains and given the Marvel universe a unique texture

Artist PROFILE

Simone Bianchi



COUNTRY: Italy
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Sergio Toppi, Claudio Castellini, Travis Charest, Esad Ribic, Olivier Coipel, Rick Berry, Oscar Chichoni, Frank Frazetta, Massimiliano Frezzato, Moebius, Alex Ross, Brom and Adam Hughes
SOFTWARE USED: None – I'm a traditional artist. Colourist uses Photoshop and Painter
AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE: Two days interior, three-four days for covers and paintings
WEB: www.simonebianchi.com

Browsing the shelves of the local comic shop, your eye is drawn to all the fantastic covers on display. The trick is choosing a book that delivers internal artwork which lives up to the promise of the front cover. When the artist is Simone Bianchi, you don't need to worry.

Whether you're flicking through his Thor mini-series, Astonishing X-Men or Wolverine, each panel looks like it could be a front cover. His work doesn't just look like comic art – it looks like art full stop. And that's why he's one of the hottest creatives on the comic scene today.

The secret to his success is plain old hard work. His panels look stunning because he devotes so much attention to each image. A conventional comic penciller normally sketches a rough, then tightens it up, drawing in the stronger lines and, sometimes, adding shading. Much of the finesse is brought by a colourist. However, Simone focuses a huge amount of energy on the subtleties of the shading. In true Italian style, the Tuscany-based illustrator is all about chiaroscuro.

"Occasionally, I also use pencils but 80 to 90 per cent of the time I use watercolour or acrylic, and I add a lot of water to the acrylics to use them as though they were watercolours," he says in impeccable English, but with a strong Italian accent and a lot of passion. "Only seldom do I redefine, or clean up my shading with pencil. I'll use a very soft pencil such as a 3, 4 or 5B."

His completed internal panels are passed to another Tuscan artist, with the same first name. It's Simone Peruzzi who colours Bianchi's work digitally, and they've worked together for years. Whenever possible, however, Simone Bianchi paints the covers himself. "As you can very easily understand, for artistic reasons," he says. "With the crazy



> "After a day's work, I wash, and all those colours drip from my hands. It just feels great"

deadlines and very tight timetables we have during the production process I don't have time to do the interior colours myself. But I really have an urge and need to get my hands dirty and to use colours and brushes. After a day's work, I wash, and all those colours drip from my hands. It just feels great."

MARVEL-LOUS WORK

Simone's latest project is Thanos Rising, which is spearheading Marvel's latest revamp, Birth. The mini-series is about the origins of the Marvel villain, Thanos, who appears at the end of the incredibly successful film The Avengers. He's hugely excited about it. With the first issue due out in April, he's taking the opportunity in the series to explore the childhood and development of Thanos, who first appeared in the Marvel cosmology in 1973. Moody and bulky, the character is obsessed with death and power. If Simone's 2010 reinvention of Thor is anything to go by, expect the spectacular.

Simone has worked exclusively with Marvel since 2006, predominantly as a cover artist. His charges have included various regular titles and mini-series starring the likes of the Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, Black Panther, Captain America, Daredevil, the X-Men and Iron Man. He even co-created Romulus, a new villain for Wolverine to face.

However, his first break in US comics came after he went to New York to find work. Living in Brooklyn, Simone took the subway to Manhattan day after day to show comic editors his portfolio. Just days before returning to Italy, his efforts



Thanos Rising © Marvel 2013

THANOS *Proposed cover for Simone's latest Marvel mini-series, Thanos Rising.* Close



Ego Sum – © Vittorio Pavesio Production 2005

EGO SUM *Internal artwork from Simone's Italian comic Ego Sum, 2005.* Close



Thor For Asgard © Marvel 2010

GOD OF THUNDER *Thor reaches for Mjölnir, in Simone's melancholy version of Asgard.* Close

Gallery



THOR: FOR ASGARD

The god with the really big hammer struck a chord with the Italian artist and this is one of Simone's most accomplished series yet

Thor: For Asgard came out in 2010. Written by Robert Rodi, here we see an Asgard that's dark, cold and complex, under siege by the Frost Giants and as Odin slumbers Thor and his fellow immortals question their own purpose.

"I loved it. I loved the character, I loved the settings, I loved the environment, I loved all the characters," says Simone. "I can't wait to get back on Thor because he has all those elements which fit my style and, let's call it artistic sensibility, perfectly."

He continues: "One of the artists whose work really inspired me a lot in trying to come up with my vision of Asgard was Antoni Gaudi, the Spanish architect. His buildings, his church and everything he designed were a major inspiration for me in coming up with my own vision of Asgard. I was trying to mix that with some almost hi-tech-looking elements here and there, to make everything look as personal as possible."

When creating environments and settings he thinks about how 3D artists work with textures, applying something unique and interesting to the surfaces in his artwork, even though it's a 2D painting. This approach came from his mentor, Italian comic artist Claudio Castellini.



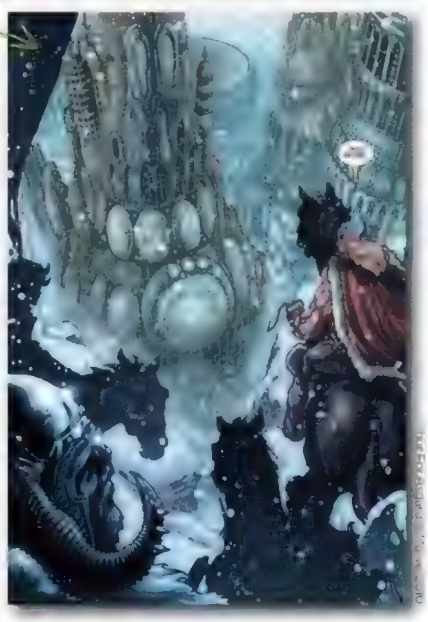
NORSE SAGARDA *The inspiration of Spanish architect Gaudi is clear to see in Simone's detailed rendering of Asgard's great buildings in the mini-series.* Close

Thor For Asgard © Marvel 2010



LIGHT AND DARK *Simone typically uses a minimum of line work, before going quickly on to the shading with acrylics.* Close

Thor For Asgard © Marvel 2010



Thor For Asgard © Marvel 2010

Comments



Ian Dean
ImagineFX

"The framing of the scene and the use of detail, colour and silhouette is the work of a confident artist. Simone ensures that we're drawn to the wonder of his Asgard architecture, but our eye finally lands on Thor, the real star of the show."



Kev G...
Pro artist

"The measured economy in the line work keeps the compositions from becoming too cluttered, and there are some interesting texture effects which are redolent of classic 1970s fantasy illustration. This analogue to the past is endorsed further by dynamic posture and composition, kept all the more vibrant by use of loose yet controlled rendering techniques."



Heather Cullymore
Reader

"I am mesmerised by the line work flowing from background to foreground. I find it amazing how Simone Bianchi manages to make even the negative space come alive with action. It's as if every line is thrusting Thor up and off the page."



Astonishing X-Men – © Marvel 2007

X-REVAMP *In 2007, Bianchi worked on the Astonishing X-Men with Warren Ellis, and redesigned their costumes.* Close

were rewarded and he landed the gig on Grant Morrison's Shining Knight mini-series for DC. "I think that was – and still is – the key moment in my entire career," says Simone. "It gave me the chance to work with one of the best writers, if not the best right now, in the comic book industry, from day one. That was a big challenge, but the biggest challenge back then was to be able to meet deadlines – that crazy fast pace that the American comic book market requires you to do."

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

At the time, Simone was used to taking four or five months to create 44 pages for Italian and French publishers. However, when he started working for DC he was asked to produce 22 pages every five weeks. If he were just doing pencils it would be a huge challenge, but he likes to paint all the intricate shading himself, too. Simone says he'd love to learn Photoshop and Painter, but feels he still has much yet to do using paints and brushes. His father, also an illustrator, began teaching him to paint before he could read or write and, save a few teenage years spent playing the drums, he's never stopped.

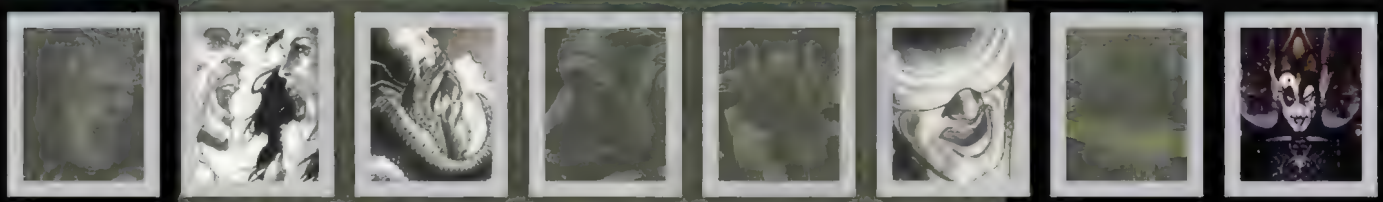
Talking to him now, you can tell he's still hyped about creating comics. One lesser-known group in the Marvel Universe he wants to do a mini-series on is the Inhumans. "I don't know if you've ever heard of characters like Black Bolt, Medusa, Karnak and Gorgon, but ever since I signed my contract at Marvel back in 2006 I've always talked about doing a mini-series with these characters. I just think that they look cool – they look amazingly cool – and I'd like to do a new series with them."



ECHI © Vittorio Pavesio Production 2000

ECHOES FROM THE CELL *A cover for Italian comics publisher Vittorio Pavesio.* Close

Gallery



Development sheet

PROJECT TITLE: JUNGLE ADVENTURE

Darren Douglas takes us through his creative process for designing two shady looking characters from a now-defunct jungle adventure game that he worked on while at Sony Liverpool

Artist PROFILE

Darren Douglas

Country: England



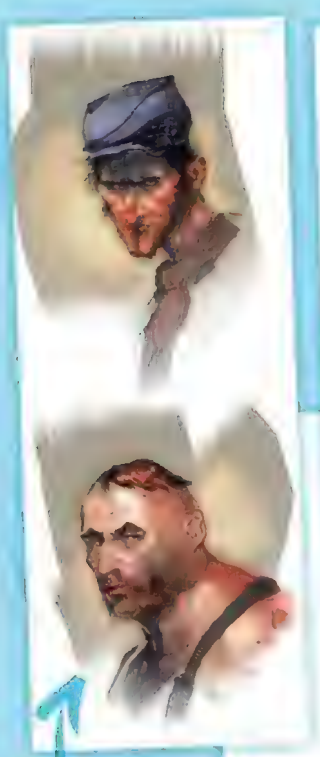
Darren has been working for 19 years. He created 2D sprites on the Amiga, then progressed to 3D, then 2D illustration and concept art for Psygnosis/Sony Liverpool. He has worked on games such as F1, Killzone 2 and Motorstorm Apocalypse, and on comics in his spare time.

www.bit.ly/ifx-ddouglas











Sketches

Final piece



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Advice from the world's best artists









This issue:

68 Compose an epic manga fight scene
Discover how DCWJ paints a battle with ninja girls, zombies and giant snakes.

74 Add emotion to your robot art
Bring mechanical paintings to life, with Steven Tung.

76 Master manga's masking methods
Doo explains how to paint using the clean lines and masking techniques.

80 Put together a comic page
The techniques and tricks PJ Holden uses to make a comic with Manga Studio.

85 Start using vector tools in Paint Tool SAI
Make the most of vector tools with Paco Rico Torres.

86 Bring a cool character to life
Manga is dynamic and expressive – Brolo reveals how to convey these feelings.

92 Work with two art programs
Don Seegmiller combines Painter and Photoshop.

100 Design a bike for a manga setting
Sunil Pant explores 3D sketching techniques.



Photoshop

COMPOSE AN EPIC MANGA FIGHT SCENE

Discover how **DCWJ** paints an epic monster battle with sexy ninja girls, zombie warriors and demon snakes!



Artist PROFILE

DCWJ

COUNTRY: Singapore



Derrick Chew, also known as DCWJ, was born in Singapore. Ever since he was a kid, he's always been fascinated by anime and superheroes on TV. He hopes that one day people can enjoy his art as much as he enjoys painting it.

www.dcwj.cghub.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
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This is the Chinese zodiac year of the snake. To celebrate this, I'm drawing a scene of creepy snake monsters and ghost zombie warriors doing battle with a couple of cat and fox ninja girls.

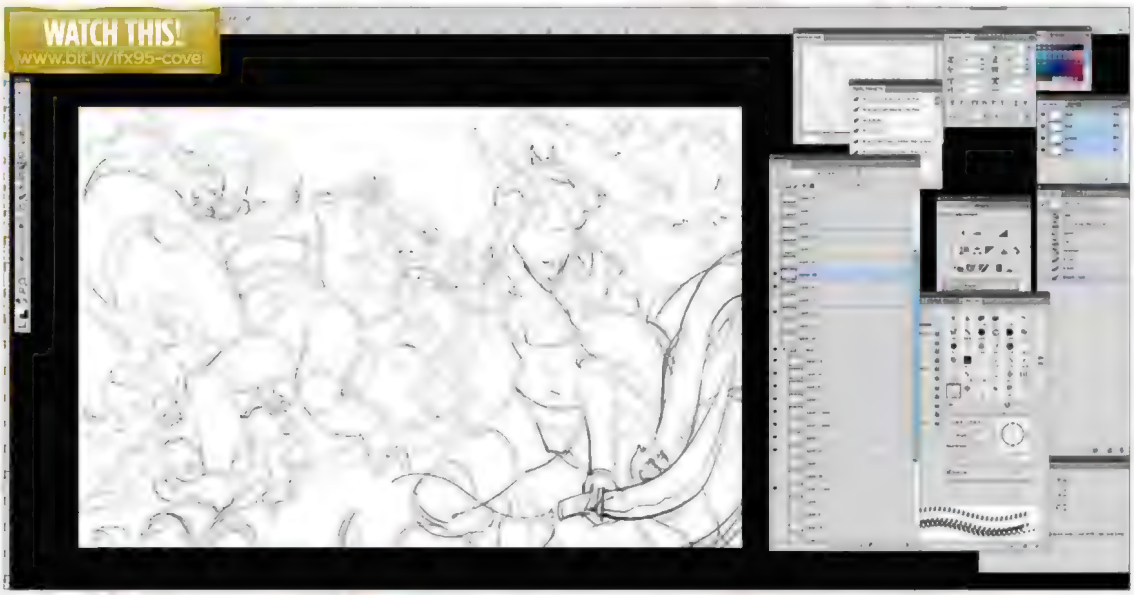
In this workshop I'm going to show you my usual approach for creating artworks that are more of an anime or manga style. Usually before I go about creating an image, I try to visualise roughly what I want my characters to look like and what timeline or world they're inhabiting.

For this piece, I've chosen to mix a little bit of traditional Japanese style in the costumes of the characters with a touch of fantasy. For example, traditional Japanese fox masks, long billowing sleeves and samurai armour plating are certain elements which I like a lot, so I try to incorporate these into their costumes.

One good way of getting your creative juices flowing is to try doodling or sketching some interesting ideas or compositions that you have already in mind. They don't need to be complete sketches, so long as they convey the ideas you have. I find that writing down my ideas, reading a book, watching movies or even taking photos of things that inspire me can help a lot, too.

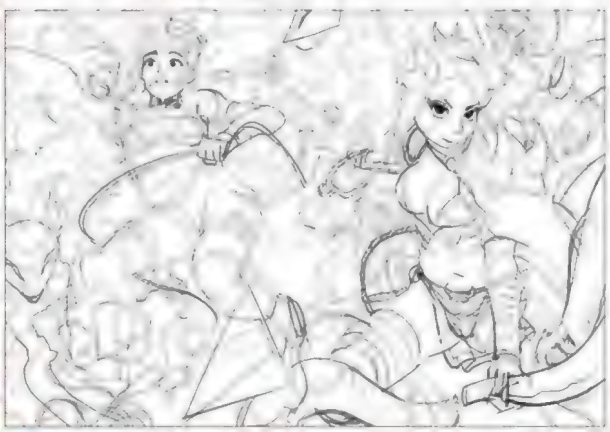
I'm going to explain more in detail as we go into the different stages of creating this image – or should I say, sexy ninja monster battle scene. Okay, let's get going!

WATCH THIS!
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1 Rough sketch and composition

With a general idea of what I have in mind, I start drawing some rough sketches. These don't need to be detailed or proportionally correct: they're more to get a feel of the character's pose, much like a gesture drawing. The aim of a rough sketch is to bring together the composition and overall feel of the image that you want to paint.



2 Detailing the rough sketch

Once I'm satisfied with the overall feel of the rough sketch, I add the smaller details that I want to see in the artwork. At this point, I'm designing the overall look of the costumes for the girls and defining more of the background and tightening the composition of the piece. The elements in the image are fluid and can still change. Sometimes it's hard to tell if something works or not until you're further along in the painting process.

3 Finalising the line art

This is the stage where elements such as the character's proportion, design and composition are finalised. As I go into the final lines, I adjust and correct anything that looks wrong or needs improving. I always feel that line art is one of the more important factors in anime or manga. Having clean and clear line art can help a lot, especially when you're ready to move on to the painting stage.





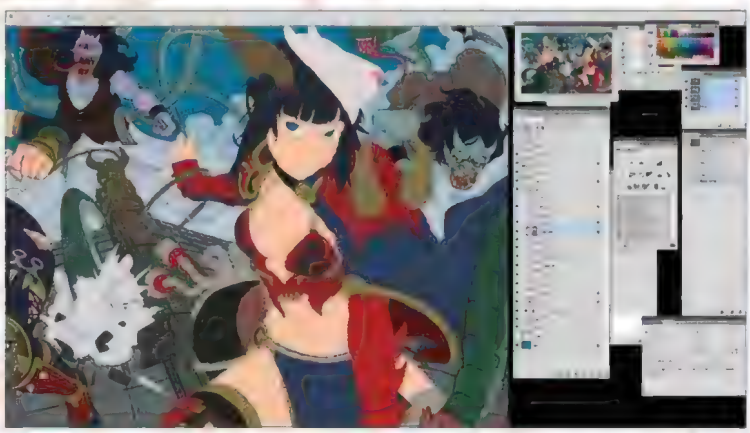
4 Preparing lines for flatting

Keeping all the characters and backgrounds on different layers helps when beginning to add the flat colours. Furthermore, when I'm drawing the line art, I need to ensure that all the outlines of each character close up properly, without breaks in the lines. This is for effective use of the Selection/Magic Wand tool, enabling me to easily select the whole silhouette of each character. Once this is done, I can fill the selection with the Paint Bucket tool.



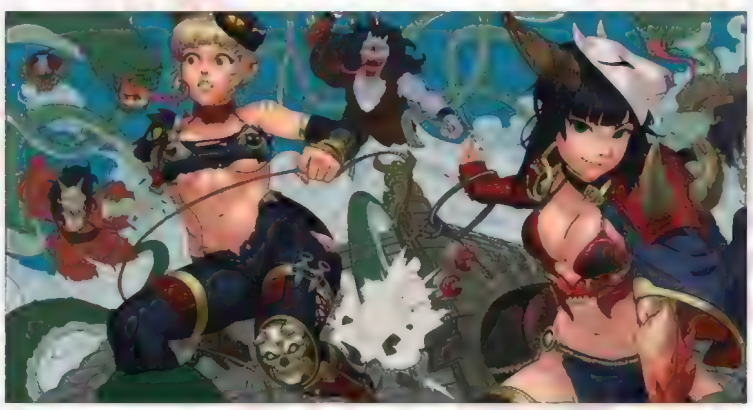
5 Colour flats

Now I separate out parts of the characters. This also serves as a rough colour palette of the artwork. However, the most important aspect of this stage is to separate the parts cleanly and neatly, for when I later use the Selection/Magic Wand tool on each part that I want to paint. This ensures that I only paint within the selected areas. It can be a tedious and repetitive process at first, but it helps with the painting process.



6 Rendering the characters

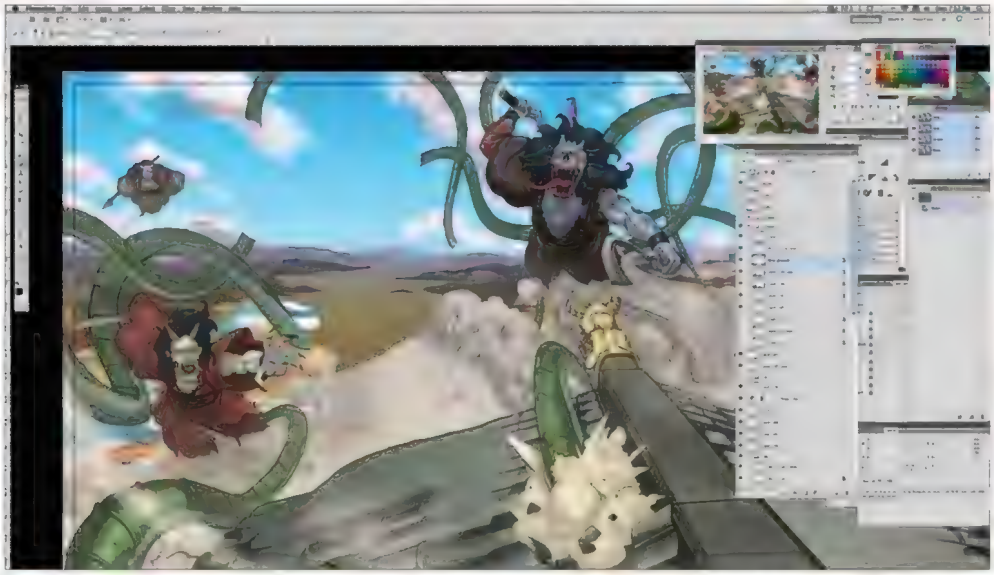
By selecting each part that I had earlier separated off, I can create a boundary of the areas that I want to paint. For example, by selecting the flesh colour with a selection tool, I'm able to freely paint within the selected flesh part of the character without bleeding over the area. This enables me to keep my painting neat and also enables me to subsequently make changes to areas that requiring editing or repainting.



7 Introducing key lighting

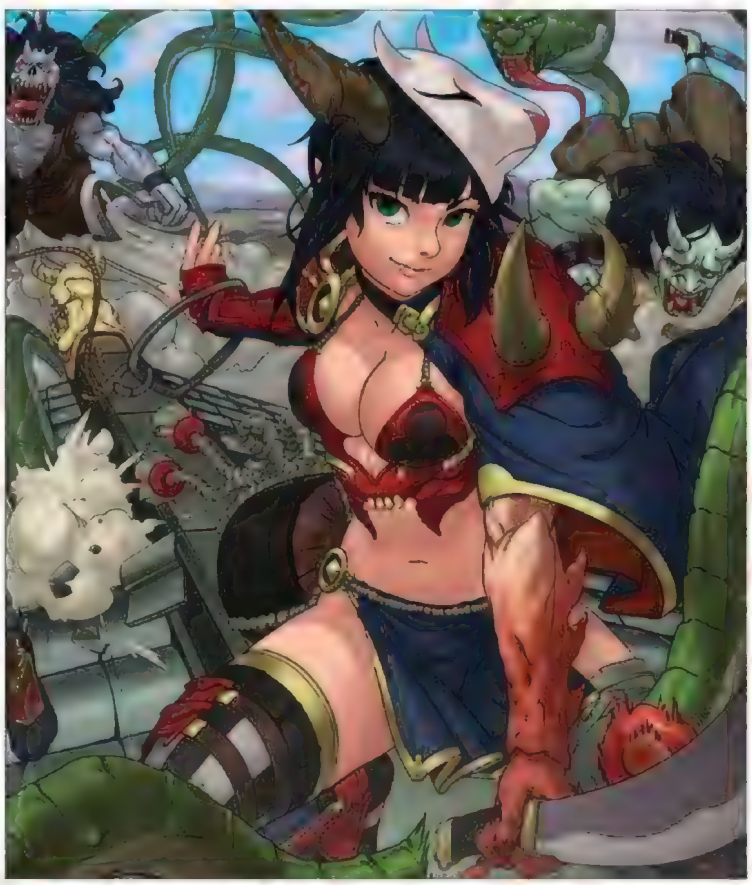
Painting an image bit by bit using selections can be tricky, because it can be challenging to see the overall lighting scheme. I have to constantly remind myself about the general light direction as I paint each part. Another way is to paint the lighting of each part that's already been rendered in relation to another. This way, I can try to keep the light source in check and depict it as accurately as possible.





8 Rendering the background

Once I start painting the background, I have to start thinking about the atmospheric perspective. For example, objects that are further away have to be pushed back further by lightening the values and reducing the contrast. Right now, I'm still mainly focused on rendering everything before I start adjusting the tonal values and colours for the whole piece.

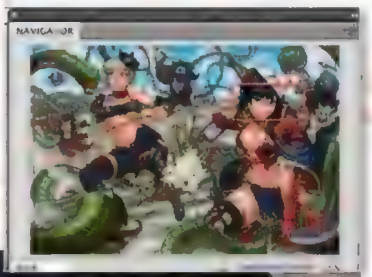


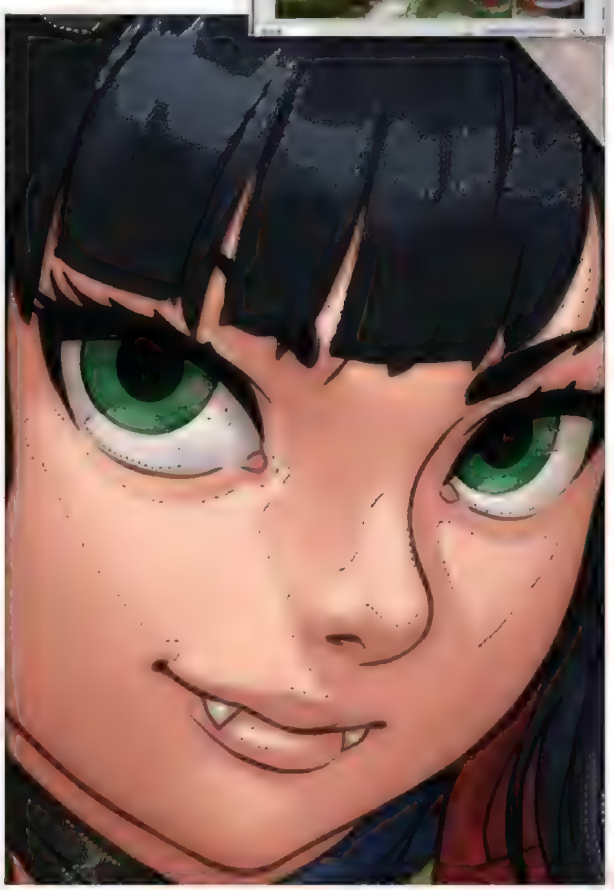
9 Adding smoke effects

Now that everything's been rendered out, I begin adjusting the lighting and adding more elements, such as some drifting smoke and fog. The smoke can convey a sense of motion and also helps to creates a more dynamic scene. At this point, I start to fog out the background, the secondary characters and other elements that aren't important. The main focus of this artwork should be the two ninja girls.

10 Enhancing the key lighting in the scene

I use the Lasso tool and the Gradient tool to enhance the key lighting. First, I use the Lasso tool to draw the shape of the area that I want to brighten, then fill in a gradient on the selected area. I find that by controlling how much gradient I want on each of the Lasso selections, I can create a faded 'cell-shaded' look that helps defines the edges and forms to make the image pop out at the viewer.





PRO SECRETS

Line work

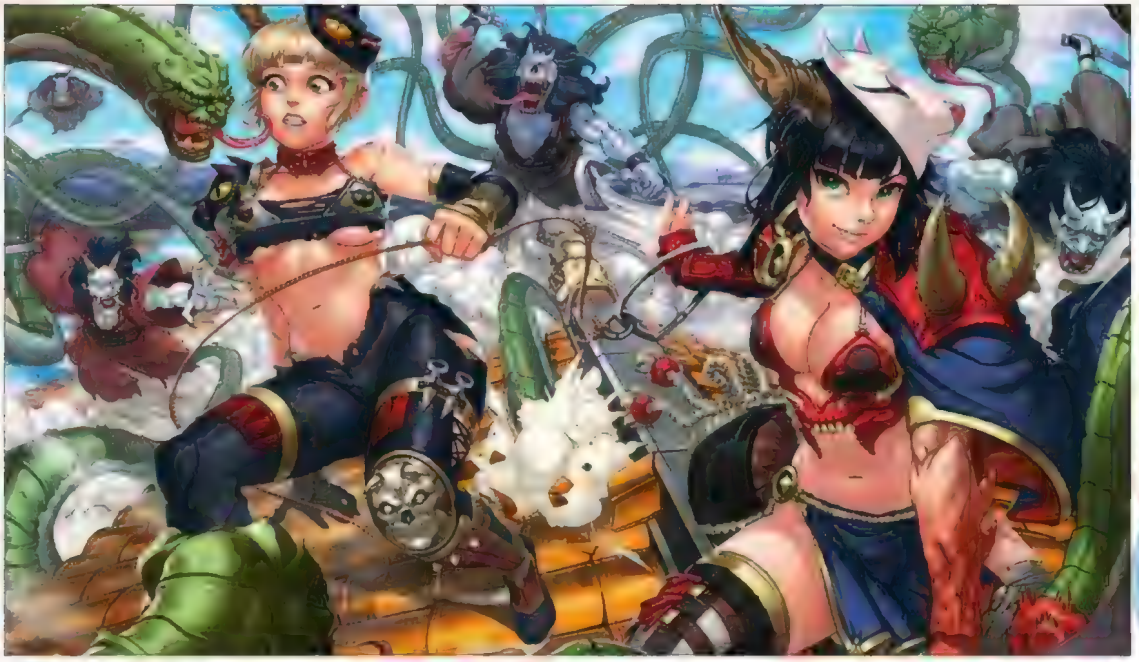
The quality of the line work is a crucial factor in manga. It'll help you...

...and can also help you...

...so that there's a sense of weight to your art.

11 Time for highlights

Now I add the specular highlights that give certain objects a reflective property. This can help to further define the forms. Elements that are matte, such as cloth, won't have as much specularity as those that are glossy – metal or glass, for instance. So by adding specular highlights to a character's eyes, it can make them feel alive. However, do this selectively or else everything will look overly glossy.



PRO SECRETS

Anatomy

[redacted]

[redacted]

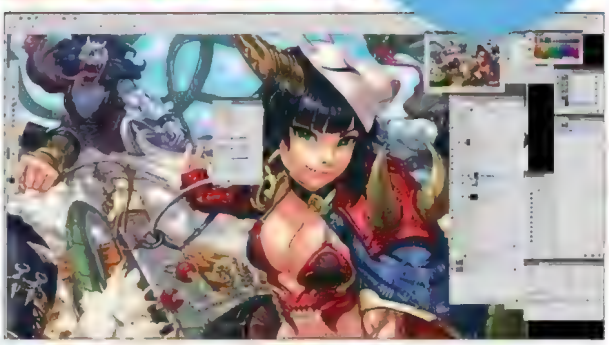
12 Making use of a secondary light source

To further integrate the characters into the scene, I add a backlight to the characters and the roof. Because there are no other notable secondary light sources (for example, a full moon or a fireplace in the background), I feel the secondary light source would perhaps be more like an ambient light coming from the sky. By adding this additional light source, the characters now look more three-dimensional.



13 Applying clothing textures

By making some simple custom brushes, I'm able to create some textures for the clothes of the fox ninja girl. I match the textures from the brushes to the clothes by following the folds on the cloak while painting. After that I use the Warp function from the Transform tool (press Ctrl+T to select the Transform tool, then right-click and choose the Warp function) to make the textures wrap around the clothes accurately.



14 Tweaking the colours

Now that the rendering is almost done, I tweak the colours and saturation to make the whole piece stand out more. To make this step easier, I keep all the original uncoloured flats for all characters and background on a different layer. I can now target and select the specific areas that require tweaking by selecting the parts on the uncoloured flats using the Selection tool. I then click back on a specific layer and adjust the image accordingly.



15 Final touches

To complete the image, I use the Liquify tool to make some small adjustments to the faces of the characters. This is a handy tool to make minor changes to an artwork without redrawing or repainting it. I then add some moving debris and purple blood from the slain snake's body, using the Motion Blur filter to give it a sense of movement.

Photoshop

ADD EMOTION TO YOUR ROBOT ART

Adopt a traditional workflow to bring your mechanical paintings to life. **Steven Tung** shares his techniques for adding a sense of real drama

Artist PROFILE

Steven Tung



DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/95-anno

The big-budget film I, Robot and other films featuring artificial life forms inspired this image, which I've called New Life. With this piece, I've tried to convey the emotion and vitality that a mechanical being could possess, and not purely the external, mechanical aspect that's so often portrayed in some films of this genre.

I've also tried to imbue the subject of the piece with human emotions such as fright and surprise. The mechanical side of the robotic character is just its external appearance in this particular case. I'm working on a series of pieces that focus on the subject of artificial life forms, but always with the emphasis on emotion. In this case, New Life is synonymous with all new life, be it organic or artificial.

I tend to approach my digital artwork in much the same way I do a conventional oil painting. I start by applying large initial strokes, which I gently refine as I go along. I initially begin a piece using only greyscale when working out the initial form of the picture.

Once I'm happy with my progress I start to add colour, slowly and carefully. This is also a nod to the classical approach I learnt at art college.

Grounding the image



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

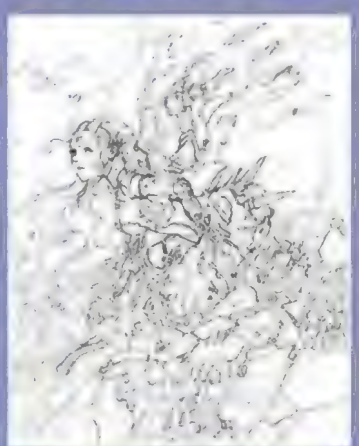
PHOTOSHOP





How I create...

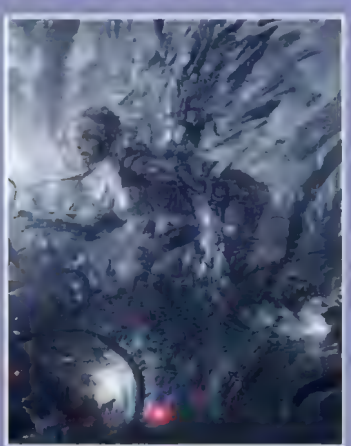
A ROBOT UNDER CONSTRUCTION



1 Getting down the initial sketch



2 Adding the background



3 Colour, movement and depth



Telling the story

Light and movement

Photoshop

MASTER MANGA'S MASKING METHODS

Doo explains how to paint a moonlit female assassin using the clean lines and masking techniques that are commonly used by manga artists

Artist PROFILE

Doo

COUNTRY: South Korea



Choi Won-Chun, or also known as Doo, is a concept artist and illustrator. He was in charge of character design for Dragon Nest at Eyedentity Games. Now he freelances.

www.doo-c.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/95-doo

Initially, my aim was to paint a dynamic scene, but as the image progressed the composition changed. Through my scribblings the idea of a scout ninja sitting on the branch of the tree in the moonlight materialised. It looked good to me, so I decided to go with this.

My painting procedure used to start with roughly drawn sketches, which I would add to until I arrived at a finished piece. However, I changed my approach once I started at Eyedentity Games, which encouraged a more casual painting approach. Things clicked into place once I began with a more detailed sketch and took things from there.

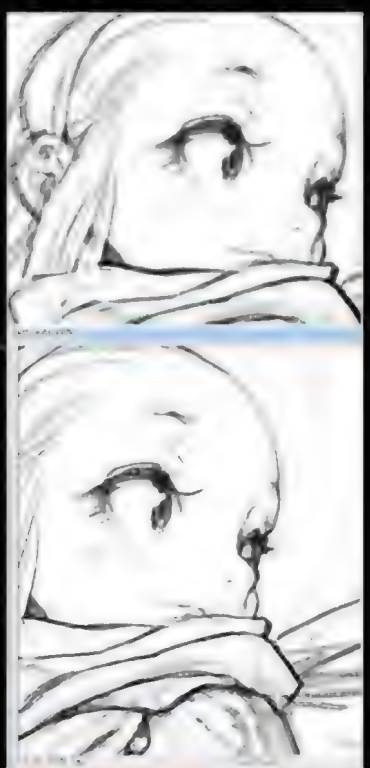
So for this workshop I'm starting with a polished sketch. It makes it easier to apply masks to it. Furthermore, it's actually a lot faster compared with my old method of developing a rough image.

1 Do the research

When starting a project I try to gather as many references as possible. You can find plenty of useful ones online. Ninjas and their lifestyle is a relatively popular subject, so hitting the internet is a good start, but there's a lot that isn't online. As an artist, you have to keep gathering references by taking photos or buying books.

2 Do a clean sketch

I put down a simple composition and polish it a little bit. I use the Chalk 60 pixels 8 brush for sketching because of its charcoal feeling. I then use the Paint Daubs filter: its effects are subtle yet effective. I keep polishing the sketch after using the filter. I might repeat this process two or three times. I don't use it too much because it could obscure part of the sketch.



Shortcuts
Rotate the canvas view
R (PC & Mac)
Turn it in 15-degree increments by holding down Shift.







3 Use masks

To make the colouring process easier I set up mask areas, dividing the scene into the foreground and background. I paint the character area and the environment around it red. Then I paint the trees behind in a darker tone. If my sketch lines are too dark it makes it tricky to see the boundary lines, so I reduce the Opacity of the sketch layer.





PRO SECRETS

Retain your sketch



4 Prepare to paint

After I've finished with masking the image, I make a new layer and check the 'Use previous layer to clipping mask' option. This enables me to get comfortable with painting in colour because I can't paint outside of the mask. Were I to skip this masking step it would take me a lot longer to polish the image. And in a commercial environment, time is money!



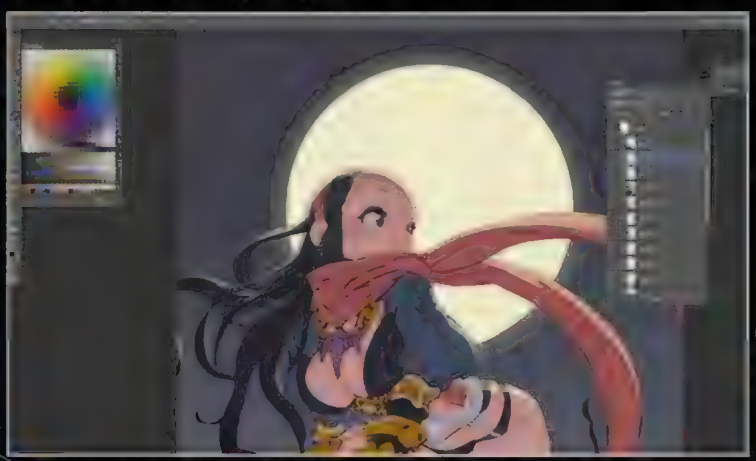
5 Base colour

I assign each part of the character to a different layer: one for the muffler, one for the clothing, one for the skin of character and so on. This is an effective way to separately control the values or saturation. If this were done on a single layer, painting all these elements would require a great deal of care.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

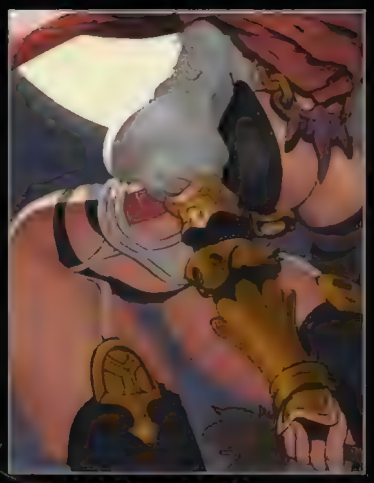
PHOTOSHOP





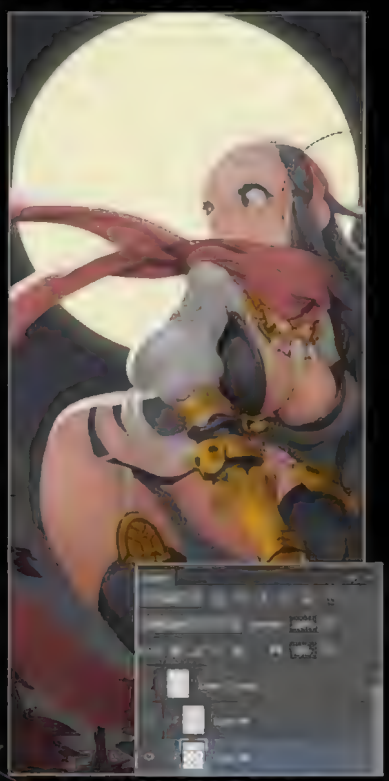
6 Create the atmosphere

Now that I'm happy with the base colour, I create the lighting scheme to match the atmosphere that I'm going for. I add a little bit of cold colour to emphasise the moonlight. I then collapse all my layers into one, but keep the original to select those areas later with the Magic Wand tool.



7 Adding detail

It's time to paint the details. When you zoom in and paint a certain area of your image, you have to keep your eye on the whole canvas by using the Navigator tool or make the effort to set up a new window displaying your entire artwork (Window>Arrange>New Window). Doing this means your detailed area won't look out of balance compared to the rest of your painting.



8 Lighting and tone

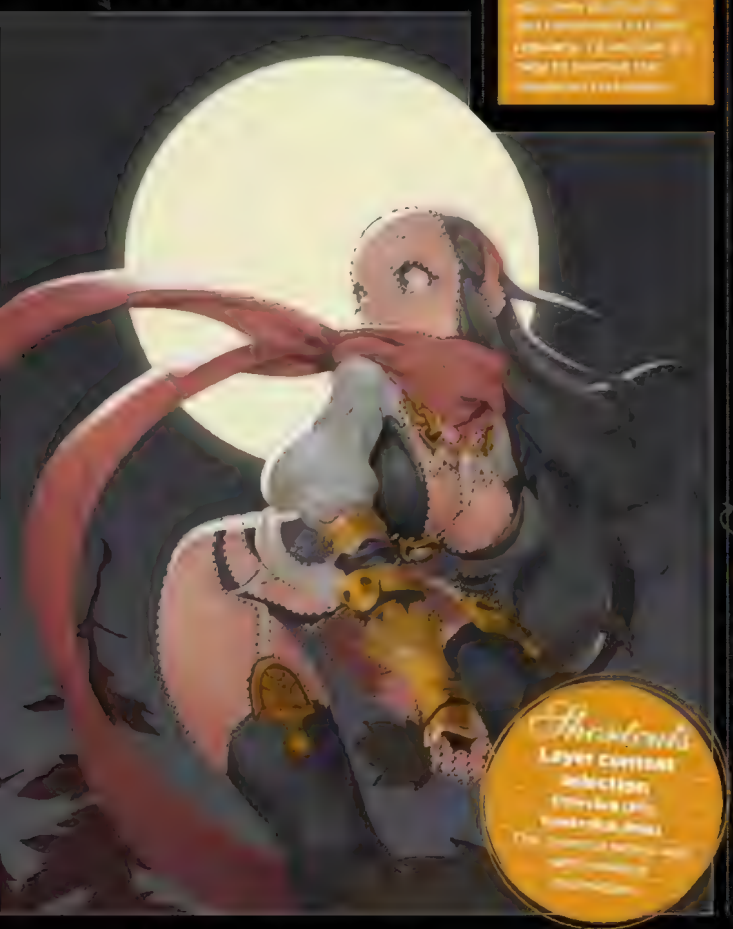
I use Soft Light, Overlay and Lighten layers to adjust the image's value and saturation, to improve the lighting scheme. It can be easy to get carried away during this stage and unintentionally darken the scene. Your painting will look more natural when you set those layers' Opacity to between 70 and 80 per cent.

9 Magic Wand tool

Now the painting's lighting has been tackled, I need to darken my shadows slightly to give the image more depth. I do this by using a Multiply layer. This helps to create an overall clearer image. I use the Magic Wand tool to select the skin of the character – it's one of my most oft-used tools – and work over the skin to darken areas in shadow.

PRO SECRETS

Get flipping

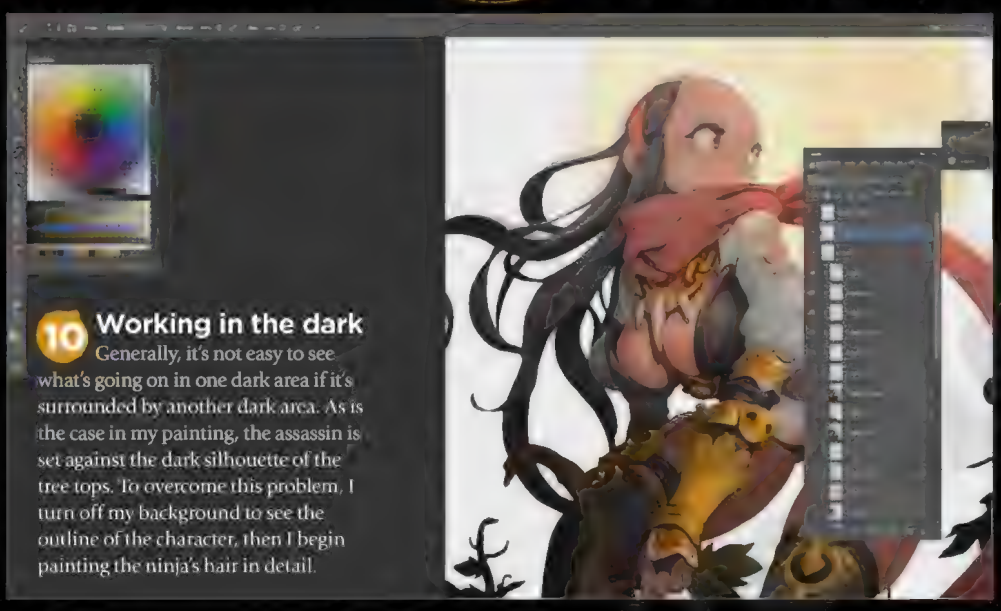




11 Vivid highlights

After stepping back and looking over the painting I decide it needs some refinements. I add some highlights here and there to liven up and strengthen the impact of the girl and the scene overall. I've found that this is a simple technique that's also very effective, but I take care not to overdo it because it could unbalance the various elements. It helps to make a solid painting, but like everything you need to make these adjustments in moderation so as to not detract from the focus of the composition.





10 Working in the dark

Generally, it's not easy to see what's going on in one dark area if it's surrounded by another dark area. As is the case in my painting, the assassin is set against the dark silhouette of the tree tops. To overcome this problem, I turn off my background to see the outline of the character, then I begin painting the ninja's hair in detail.

12 Final touches

By zooming in and out, I tweak and add refinements all over the painting. I apply more touches to the crumpled-looking hair and some minor areas of the scene. If you find that you've run out of places to paint, than it's time to save your file and go to bed, because your painting's finished. But come back to it in the morning for one last look, just in case...

Manga Studio

PUT TOGETHER A COMIC PAGE

Discover the tips, tricks and drawing techniques that **PJ Holden** uses to produce a comic with the industry standard software Manga Studio

All comics start with a script, and this was no exception. I had written a one-page, self-contained Future Shock-style story that I thought would enable me to show off some of the techniques a comic artist is often required to use. Things like an establishing shot, silhouettes, panel-to-panel transitions and so on.

The Last of its Kind is a simple bait and switch-style future shock story about an old man and his bonsai tree, and the robot who takes care of him. The story has the old man describing the bonsai tree and how it's the last of its kind, and how important that is to – we assume – humanity, and, in the final panel we reveal that the old man doesn't realise it, but he's also the last of his kind.

Drawing comics is a peculiar skill, one that requires expertise in anatomy, costuming, lighting, architecture, drawing vehicles and many other techniques, but they're all subservient to the single demand of telling the story. As a consequence, one of the dangers is getting lost in the minutiae of a single drawing. You'll often find yourself falling in love with a panel or a face or a figure, but in the context of the story it just doesn't work. Sometimes a correction can be as simple as flipping the panel, moving a figure more off centre, or cropping something in the panel differently. Even removing the panel borders can help enormously. It can be the smallest of things.

1 Read the script!

It always starts here – reading the script once to get a grasp of the story. I'll read the script a number of times to become familiar and comfortable with it, until I'm ready to start drawing the thumbnails. Since my job is to communicate the script to the reader, making sure I understand it is vital!

2 All thumbs

Breaking the script into a thumbnail drawing is essential. At this stage I'm trying to work out where characters are placed in a panel, how the panels will flow together, and whether the writer's instruction for "large panel" is out of step with the other panels' dialogue requirements. Typically, the more dialogue on a panel, the larger it needs to be. I draw the thumbnail using my Pencil Side On tool. I don't want to get lost in the details and it's well suited for this.

3 Layout options

I decide to take another stab at the thumbnail. The layout is a little dull, and much more like the middle of a story in terms of its panel rhythm. I need a page that looks like a standalone unit. Taking the establishing shot and putting it as a single tall panel allows it to dominate the page at a distance. However, experience tells me that after reading it, the panel will quickly recede into the background.





Artist PROFILE

PJ Holden

COUNTRY: Northern Ireland



PJ has been drawing professional comic books for over a decade. In that time he's worked for Games Workshop, 2000 AD, Dynamite and Image Comics. He's also the co-creator of Numbercruncher with Si Spurrier published by Titan Comics.

www.pauljholden.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/[illegible]

PRO SECRETS

Be a team player

Drawing comics is a team sport. From editor to colourist, they're all aiming to get the story done and anything you can do to help those people will be time well spent. Much of your future work will come from word of mouth, so it pays to be easy to work with.



4 Character designs

Usually character designs come after the script reading. However, because this is a single page story, with characters that are only appearing here the once, there's no need to overthink them. I scribble out a rough idea, but really, I'll design them as I draw the page.



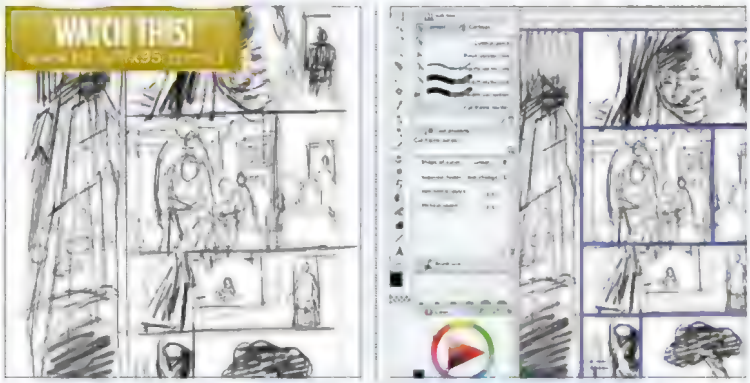
5 Creating the page

I create a new page in Manga Studio, to the sizes as required by my editor. Never guess these sizes! If you're not sure, ask (I've been burnt before!). I set the resolution to 600DPI: this is often higher than is required, but you can never be sure where or how work will be republished, and technology moves so quickly that anything lower than 600DPI could be a gamble!


IT'S BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T IT?
THIS IS PINUS PARVIFLORA OR THE JAPANESE WHITE PINE.
A BONSAI TREE
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. IS IT IMPORTANT?
IT'S THE LAST OF ITS KIND!
OF COURSE IT'S IMPORTANT!
WHEN IT DIES, WE WILL ALL BE DIMINISHED.
YOU CAN GO NOW.
"AS YOU WISH."
IS HE CONTENT?
HE IS.
THOUGH I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT.
"BECAUSE, HE IS THE LAST OF HIS KIND."

6 Rough stuff

I tend to pencil in a couple of stages. The first stage is when I roughly block in everything I think I want on the page. I divide the page into the panels required and starting with panel one, work my way through. I'm still thinking about the script at this stage, as well as where the captions will go and if there's enough room for everything!



7 Slice 'n' dice

Using my thumbnail as a guide, I create a new Frame Folder in Manga Studio, and slice each frame using the Cut Frame tool. This divides the page up into comic panels (Manga Studio uses the term Frame, but UK and US comics tend to refer to them as panels). Each panel then has its own frame folder, capable of having multiple layers all masked off to fit. I set the frame's border to 0.7mm because I prefer a solid panel border.



8 The establishing shot

This is part of the grammar of comics, and is essential in grounding the reader in the world. Having decided to make panel one a page-high column, I start to build a city: roughing a perspective grid is fast using Manga Studio's perspective rulers. I pencil in a couple of unusual-looking flying vehicles to further push the strip into 'the future'.

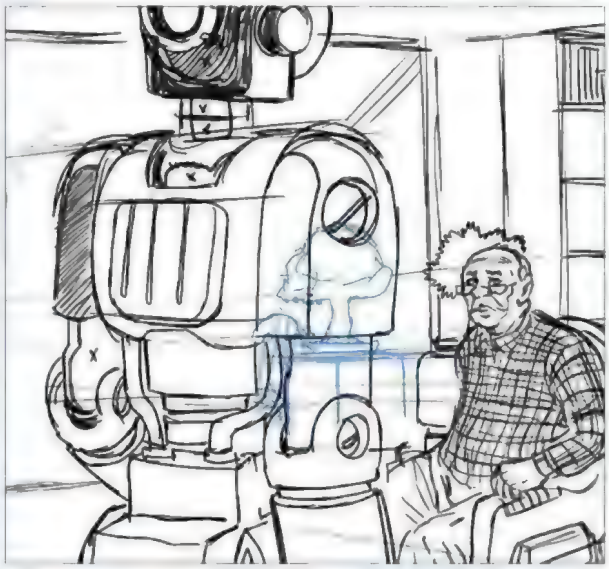


9 The Old Man and the Tree

The focus here is the old man's expression. The tree helps to frame his face, while his head and shoulders help to frame the robots behind him. I make sure that at least 25 per cent of the panel is, effectively dead space, an area where the art is relatively unimportant and clear for adding text and captions. That's a good rule for every panel.

10 Letters entertain you

Dialogue in comics is 'spoken' left to right, so to ensure readability you need to stage the panel such that the characters appear as they speak. Failing to do so could leave you with crossed dialogue tails or, worse, insufficient room for the dialogue.



Shortcuts

Colour toggle
X and C (PC only)
Enables you to quickly switch between the foreground and background colours.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

MANGA STUDIO 5

CUSTOM BRUSHES: PENCIL SIDE ON

This is a pencil tool with a texture that's also designed to give a broader stroke when a Cintiq pen is held at an angle. I use it to create rough drawings, or shade fill areas of black.

SPRAY PEN

This pen uses a scanned-in splatter of black ink, to give me a semi-random ink splatter effect. It's great for stars or building texture. I use it in panel one to create the night sky.



11 Panel to panel

Panel four is a small reflection of panel two, and while panel five is a change of scene, the two-way mirror where you can see the old man tending the bonsai maintains the panel-to-panel continuity, which is so useful in storytelling. While the backgrounds on each panel are very basic, by keeping the relationship between the man and the tree consistent it's easy to tell that each panel follows the other in a fairly simple, linear fashion.



12 Lights out!

The robot steps out into a darker room. By keeping this panel in shadow and the nurobot in silhouette, it's easy to tell that the mood and scene has shifted. The suggestion of the robot coming out of the door, and the positioning of the old man and the tree in a large window suggests this is an observation room of some kind.

15 Ch-ch-changes!

At this point, having made a departure from the script, I'd run it by the writer and editor. More often than not these changes are welcomed: sometimes the drawing you do turns up an idea that's even better than that in the script, and it's one of the reasons that comics is a magical collaborative medium. Although, less often, sometimes it turns out you've radically altered the writer's intent and you may need to rein it in a bit! But because I'm the writer on this particular strip, I like the change!

13 A shady robot

The original idea here was to show a full headshot of the nurobot. This would suggest that the nurobot is to the old man as the old man is to the bonsai tree. But it would have more power if we kept some mystery about the nurobot. By keeping its face in shadow and cropping in, it leaves room for all sorts of questions.



14 Full stop

I like the last panel of the last page of a comic to resonate – it's the final punctuation mark on the story. The script and layouts had the old man tending his bonsai tree, but a last-minute brainwave suggested a stronger image would be the iconic shape of the bonsai tree on its own. It's a strong image, but on its own it implies that the old man is no longer able to tend to it.







16 Think ink!

Page pencilled, it's time to go at it with inks. I start with the last panel, since it looks the most fun to draw, and begin inking using the Turnip pen. The tree bark, in particular, is enormously enjoyable to draw. It's the sort of noodly work I do while watching a TV show. Stepping back a little, I decide to remove the panel border on this frame. It doesn't need it and it feels like a nice moment.



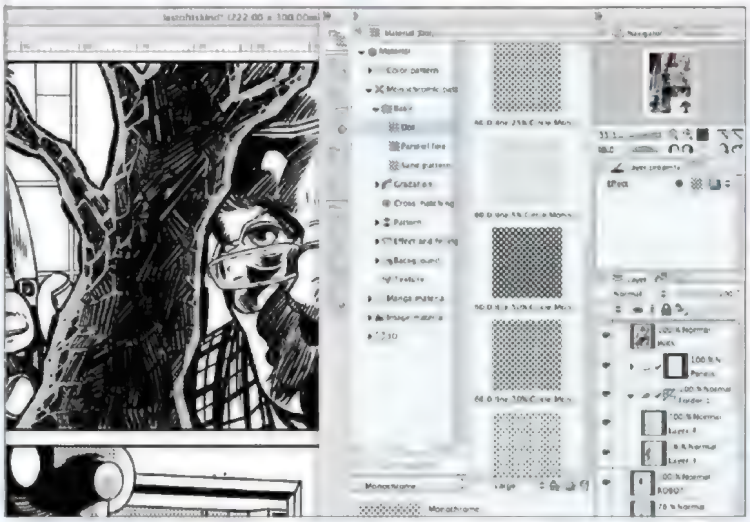
17 Inking around

I move on to inking panel one (I tend to jump around a lot when inking). Inking traditionally, I'd always start with the last panel and work my way backwards through each panel, which stops the pencils from smudging. This obviously isn't a factor on digital inks, so I hop around depending on my mood. I'll add some effects later using an Ink Splatter pen.



18 Toning it up

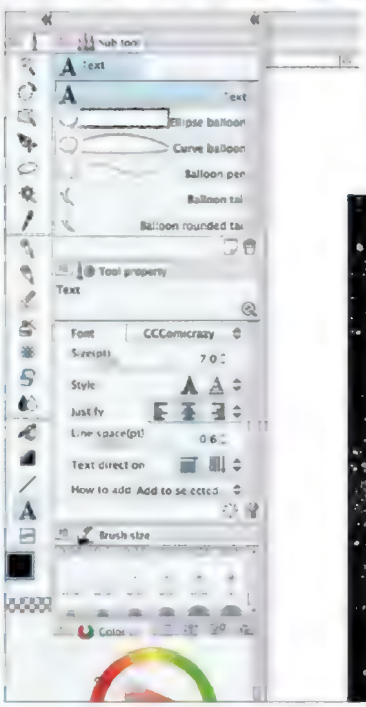
One of the distinct features of manga (and a feature of Manga Studio) is screen tone, so I apply one of the broader screen tones to the full page by dragging and dropping a screen tone from the Materials folder. I then erase the tone or reapply it by using any of the normal pen tools. I add some tone, specifically to foreground elements, to help push them further into silhouette without losing them entirely to black.



19 Letters

No comic is complete without some letters, so panel by panel, I type up the script and draw captions and dialogue using the Manga Studio lettering tools. I make sure that they don't dominate the art. Lettering is a highly skilled art form on its own. I'm a firm believer that the best way to learn to draw comics is to simply draw comics. Lettering them marks that final step and enables you to step back and see what you've learnt. And, really, no matter how many pages you've drawn, there's always something new.







Paint Tool SAI

START USING VECTOR TOOLS

Paint Tool SAI enables you to create vector images easily. Learn how to make the most of these handy tools with **Paco Rico Torres**

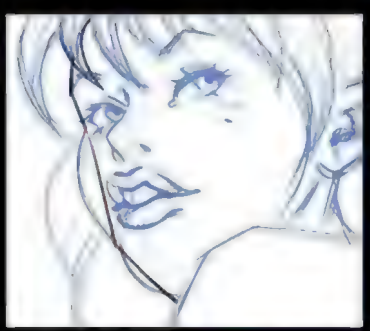
Sometimes you need to create clean and precise shapes. Perhaps you need to paint a perfectly curved katana, or ink with precise, clean strokes. In these situations, vector graphics are helpful.

If you draw a vector line, you can modify it until it has exactly the shape you want. You can also resize it without losing quality. That's why they are so interesting when it comes to creating perfectly clean shapes.

In Paint Tool SAI, vector tools are called Linework tools and can only be used on Linework layers (created by pressing the button with a little pen on it next to the new layer button). Vector tools aren't difficult to use once you spend a bit of time with them. However, working with them can be slow, so you need patience.

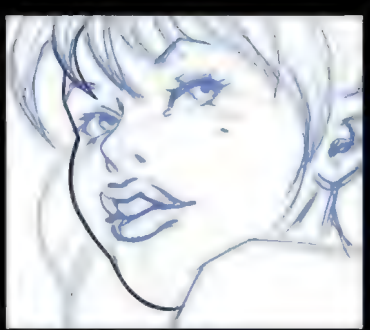
1 Learning to make the first strokes

Imagine that you have a rough pencil drawing, like this one of mine here, and you want to ink it in a very clean way. Simply create a new Linework layer in SAI, then choose the Pen tool and create some straight lines over the top of your sketch. Then press Ctrl or choose the Modify tool. As a result, you'll see a lot of small dots (these are control points) inside the line.



2 Modifying the control strokes

Next up, choose the Modify tool and you'll see a lot of options on the Tool tray – and you should find all of them to be pretty much self-explanatory. Choose the second option and then click and drag on one of the control points on your drawing. You can then modify the line to your taste – you can bend it to perfectly match the pencil lines of your sketch if you so wish.



3 Experiment stroke by stroke

The process is basically the same for all the lines. As you become more experienced with the program you'll start using some of the other Linework tools, such as the Eraser, which erases control points, and the Pressure tool, which modifies the pressure of the line – making each point thicker or thinner. Spend time experimenting with these to see the different results you can have.



Artist PROFILE

Paco Rico Torres

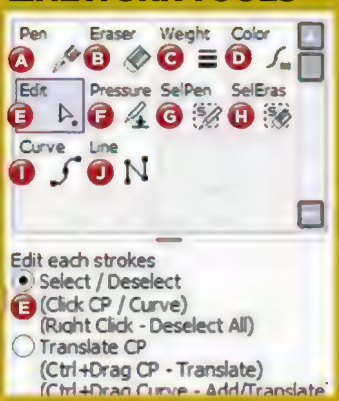
COUNTRY: Spain



Paco is a freelance illustrator who's worked on art for several card games, magazines and books.

www.bit.ly/ifx-paco

LINEWORK TOOLS



A. Pen tool
The Pen tool is the one you use to draw. It works pretty much as the ordinary SAI tools.

B. Eraser
The Eraser removes control points.

C. Weight
Weight changes the size of the line proportionally. So if there are thicker or thinner parts on the line, you won't lose them, it will just change the scale.

D. Color
Color changes the colour of the line.

E. Edit
Edit modifies the line. It has many functions that can be selected on the Tool tray.

F. Pressure
Pressure makes parts of the line (control points) either thicker or thinner.

G. Selection Pen
Selection Pen can be used to draw something, and when you choose any other tool, that drawing will automatically become a selection.

H. Selection Eraser
Selection Eraser can be used to erase what you draw with the Selection Pen.

I. Curve
Curve creates curved lines. Click, then drag, then click again, and it will create a curve automatically between points.

J. Line
Line does the same as the Curve tool, but it creates straight angular lines.

Photoshop

BRING A COOL CHARACTER TO LIFE

Manga can be defined as a dynamic and expressive art form. In this workshop **Brolo** reveals how to convey these feelings in your paintings

Artist PROFILE

Brolo
COUNTRY: Chile



Known as Brolo online, Eduardo's art style has been influenced by video games and anime. He's busy working on character design and illustrations for several companies, including DeNA, KoF, Moonga and Dark Rises.
www.bit.ly/ifx-brolo

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/95-male

One of the reasons why manga is universally recognised is because of its capacity to place mystical characters in its particular world view of beauty, whether it's in an everyday setting or one of fantasy.

Characters with huge swords, magical powers and exaggerated clothing that appear in either animes or video games are always a source of inspiration for my artwork. This illustration is no exception.

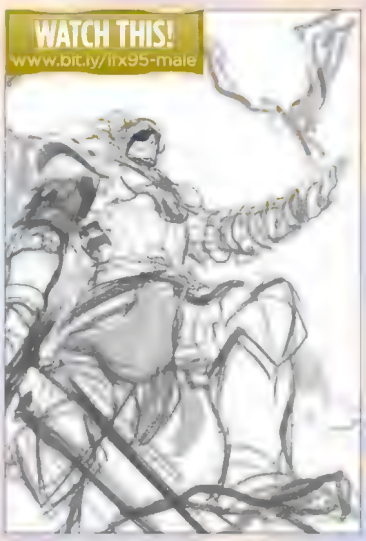
In Slevann the Dragon Trainer I'll try to illustrate all these characteristics, beginning with a clear and defined sketch in which I usually decide on the composition and elements, and what I want to say to the viewer. Later, I'll apply tonal volume and colour using a visual approach to achieve a result that gives the illusion of a finished piece. Finally, I'll show you how to enrich the work through textures, and reveal the painting shortcuts that have helped me throughout my career.



1 Defining the character

Before I start the illustration, I usually design my character concept separately. I like to get an idea of the character before I commit to a pose or scenario for the main painting. Having said this, I always keep an open mind in case I don't like what I see developing on the canvas.

WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/ifx95-male



2 Sketching with force

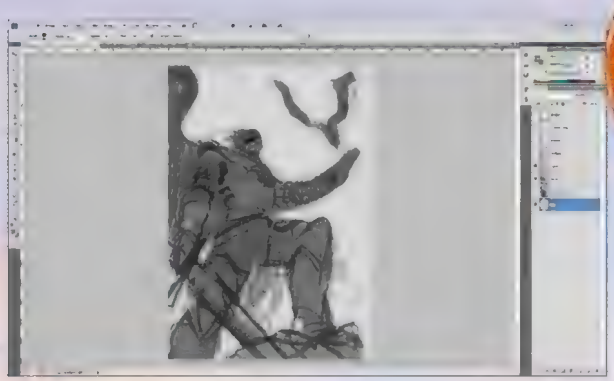
I usually sketch quickly with soft and defined brushes, trying to visualise a simple but powerful scene. To do this I choose a low angle to increase the majesty of the moment, imagining that it's a crucial scene in an epic film. Once I achieve this I accentuate the character with a Normal Hard brush.

PRO SECRETS

Become an illusionist

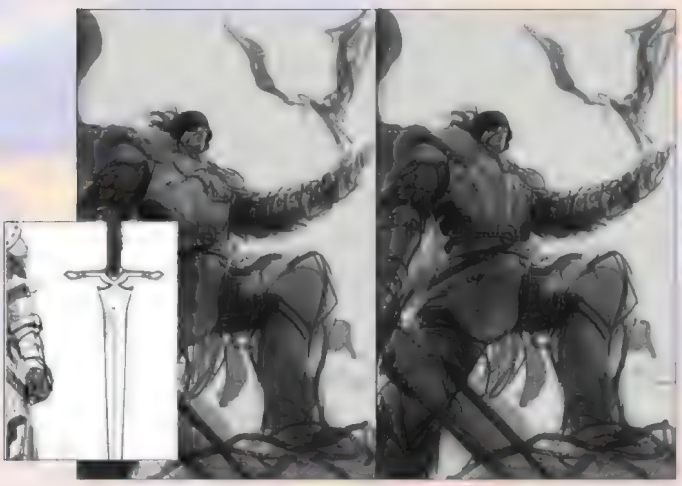
There's no need to give the entire illustration the same level of finish because the viewer doesn't take in all the various elements at the same time, instead concentrating on the focal point(s) that you've defined. This means that you should adjust your level of finish accordingly. This will improve your impressionist skills and, of course, save time.





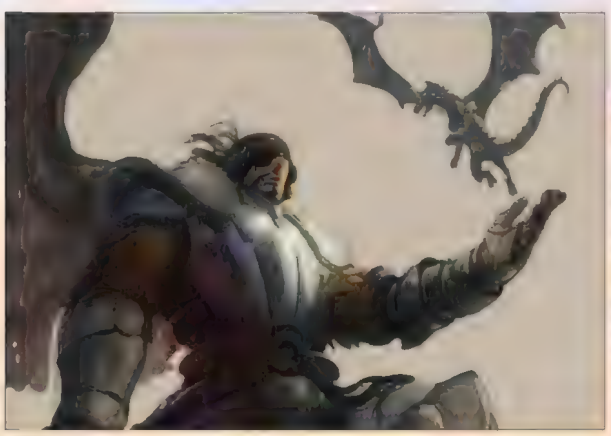
3 Defining values

I start working the lights and shadows of my character. First I ascribe the range of values that I've defined in each section of my image: a background with a high value and a character with a low value. Then I introduce a spotlight to add a dramatic feeling to the scene.



4 Creating focus and volumes

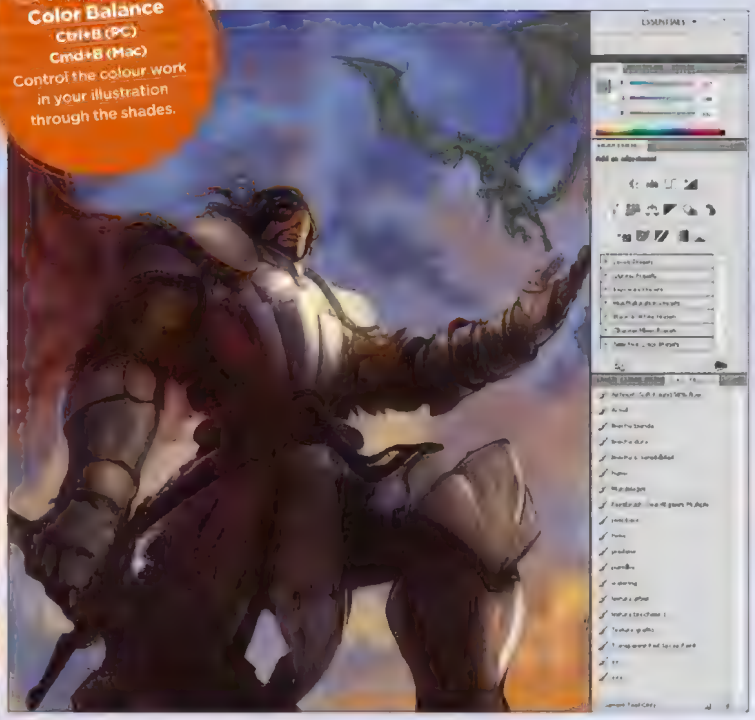
I analyse the greyscale's structure, starting with the general illumination and the final volume of the character. I also define the main focal point of the illustration, trying to maintain consistency within the range of tones that I've assigned in each section of the work. Using my concept sketch as a guide, I give more shape to Slevann's armour and correct any inconsistencies I find in his anatomy.



5 Colouring the greys

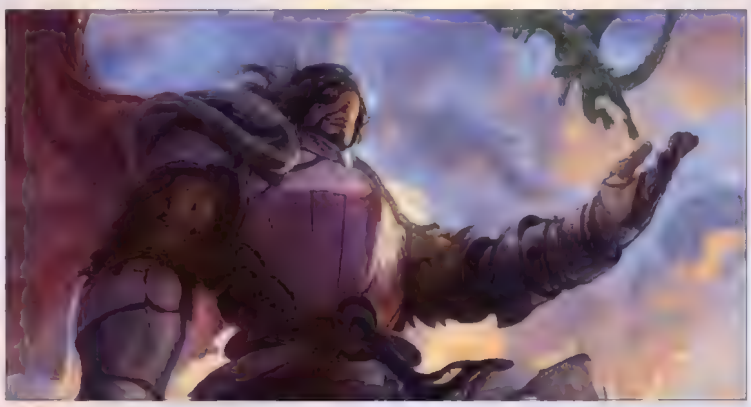
I place two new layers over the character's layer: a Multiply layer to create the local colours and an Overlay layer to create the highlights. In either case I use a Soft brush with Opacity set between 70 and 90 per cent. Finally I copy the Overlay layer to enhance the highlights, and adjust the opacity of these three layers until I find the right colour.

Shortcut
Color Balance
Ctrl+B (PC)
Cmd+B (Mac)
Control the colour work in your illustration through the shades.



6 Defining the illumination

Now I use Photoshop's Hue/Saturation (Ctrl+U) and Levels (Ctrl+L) tools to define the warmth of the light and the coolness of the character's shadow. Once I'm satisfied with the result I merge the layers (Ctrl+E) and start to detail the final work and enhance the structure of the armour, modifying some sections that I don't like, such as the chest and arms.



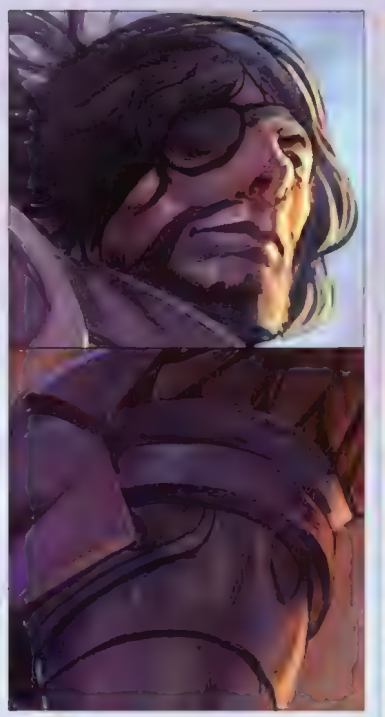
7 Colour harmony

Even though I don't usually use the double complementary colour scheme approach, in this illustration I take it into consideration. The pairs of colours are formed by violet/yellow and orange/blue. Blue has the dominant role, violet and orange have the transition role, and yellow is the tonic. Playing with these combinations is the key to achieving the right colour in the illustration.



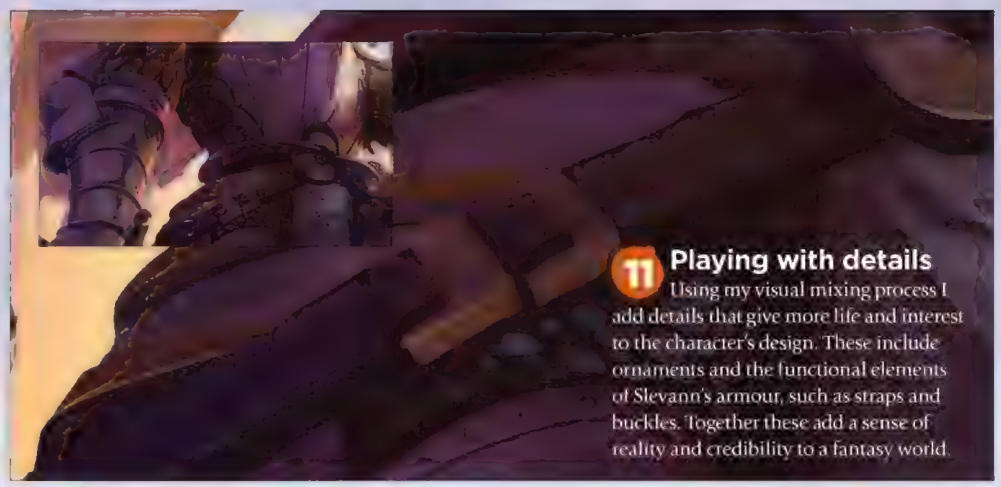
8 Working with the background

Once the character's light is defined, I work on the sky using a textured brush in a range of tones that are high in comparison to the character, to create contrast among both elements. Working with this tonal difference between the figure and background, I maintain the idea that the colour is the only unifying element between both factors, and so it's crucial to use similar colours within the image.



9 Visually mixing the colours

With the colours already defined and with a Hard brush set at 80 per cent Opacity I begin painting in the details and a final finish pass in each section. However, this finish pass ends when 100 per cent of the visualisation process tells me that it's enough. In other words, the eye does the work of mixing the colours through the optical effect of the finish pass, enabling me to save time and paint efficiently.



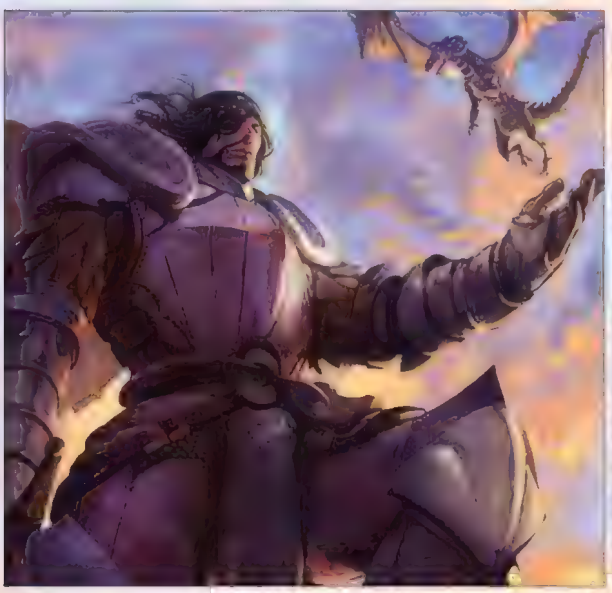
11 Playing with details

Using my visual mixing process I add details that give more life and interest to the character's design. These include ornaments and the functional elements of Slevann's armour, such as straps and buckles. Together these add a sense of reality and credibility to a fantasy world.

PRO SECRETS

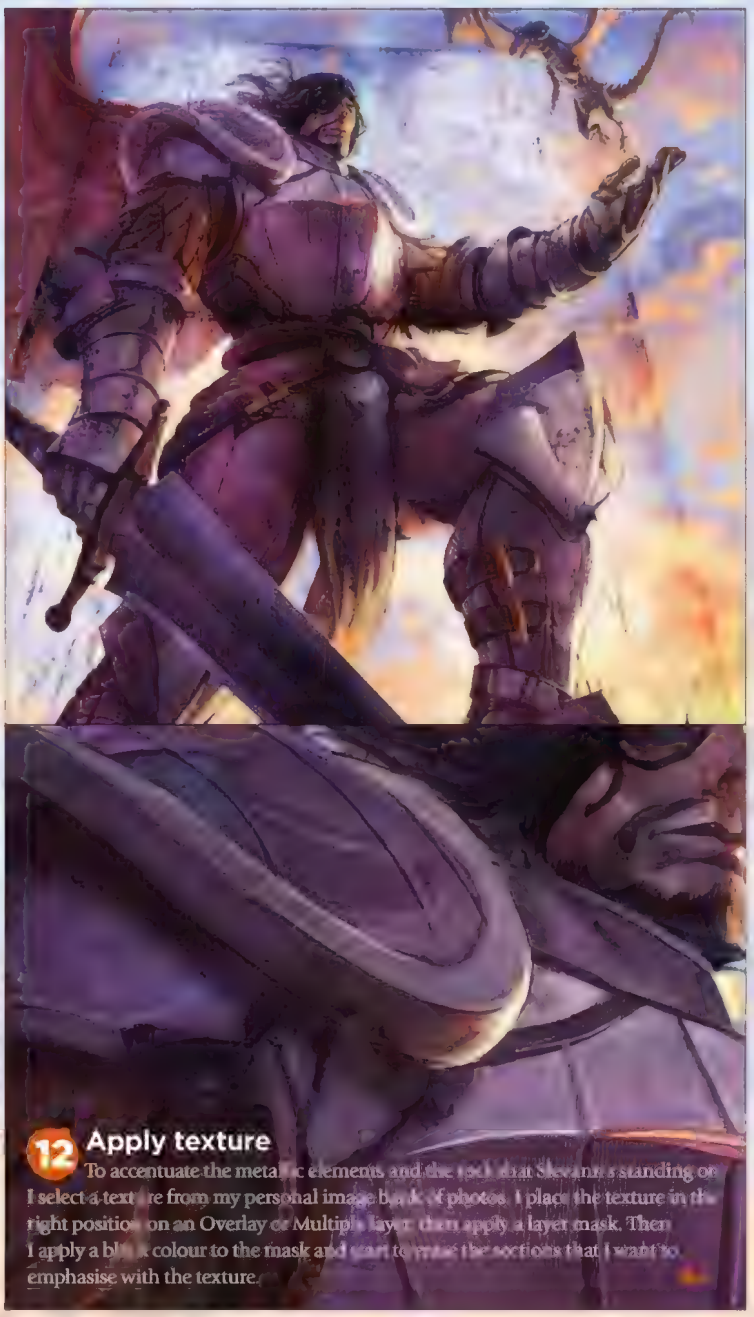
Rest your eyes

After a long period of work, my eyes usually become tired. This can affect your perception of what is complete, causing you to continue working and sometimes ruining what you have already done. Because of this, I usually rest for 10 minutes after two hours of work, and for a 20 minute break after four hours. In addition, I always step away from a finished piece after a few hours, because a day or two later I can see it with fresh eyes. This helps me to see more errors and make better decisions about the piece of art.



10 Focus of the finished look

The various elements in a painting must not benefit from the same level of finish. This is because there are always sections of an image that require more detailing than the rest, because the eye stops for a longer time on those parts. Those sections are usually the focal points: in this instance, Slevann's face and chest.



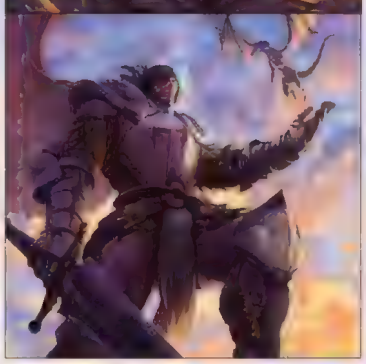
12 Apply texture

To accentuate the metallic elements and the cold that Slevann is standing on I select a texture from my personal image bank of photos. I place the texture in the right position on an Overlay or Multiply layer, then apply a layer mask. Then I apply a black colour to the mask and start to erase the sections that I want to emphasise with the texture.

13 Sky work

For the sky I use a textured and Soft brush, working in small sections and always bearing in mind the focal light and the volumes. Once the majority of the work is finished, I start defining with the same textured brush, but with extra hardness in the edge and bulges in different sections of the clouds, until I achieve the desired effect. Finally, I increase the focal light using an Overlay layer and a high luminosity yellow colour.

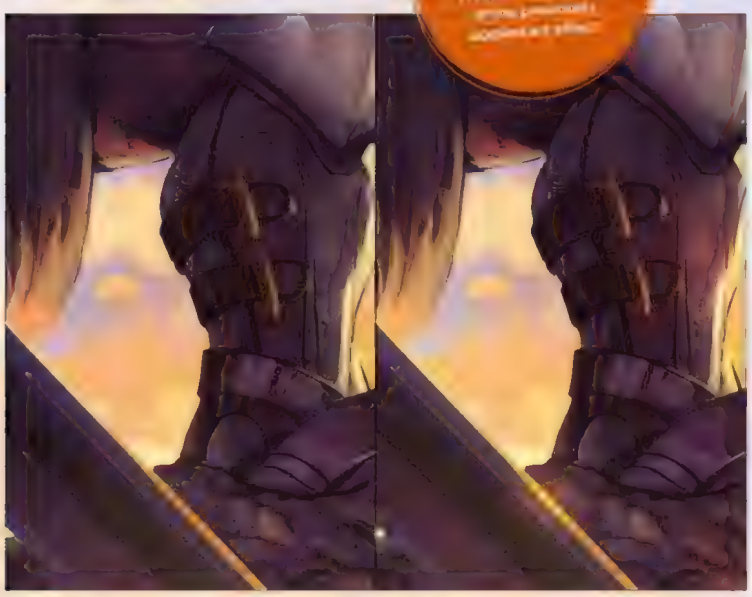






15 Fire effects

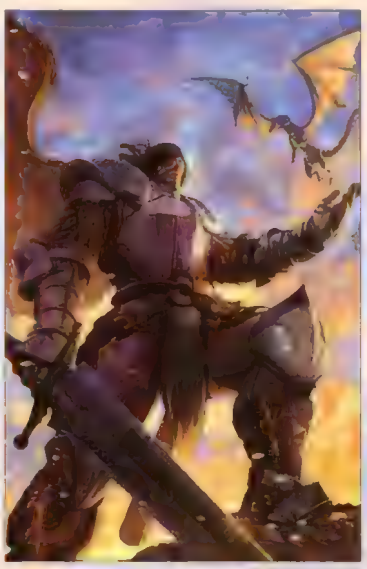
To give a dramatic quality to the image, I use a Hard brush to create the effect of burning embers blown about by the wind. I then apply Motion Blur on a low level to these fiery elements. This detail adds movement and atmosphere to the whole scene.



14 Environment effect

Once the volume colour work is almost finished, I merge the layers, leaving only the figure and background separate, and for a workflow reason, the cape too. Now I start incorporating both elements using Overlay layers, in which I apply radial degradation with the colour of the flames, until those parts where the light falls into Slevann is at 40 per cent. This creates richer and more significant tones and colours in the scene.





16 Final atmospheric adjustment

I decide to give more richness to Slevann and the dragon's shadows using the Color Balance tool. This adds a subtle warmth to the characters' shadows, completing the effect of the fiery glow on them.

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/ B A L L I S T I C /

Painter & Photoshop

WORK WITH TWO ART PROGRAMS

Combine Painter and Photoshop? **Don Seegmiller** is your friendly guide as he shows you how to use both in creating your fantasy art

If you can accomplish your goal using one art program, why would you want to use multiple ones? Well, most programs have their advantages and disadvantages. No single program offers the complete set of tools and features.

Here, I'm going to use Corel's Painter 12 and Photoshop CS6 to create a digital painting. I don't use both programs equally in every painting. Sometimes, I use one of them exclusively. However, there are features and tools in both programs that I may use extensively.

Photoshop has great depth, enabling the artist to do almost anything. But it can seem intimidating initially. Corel's Painter is arguably the premiere digital painting program, with its ability to emulate traditional artists' tools. Its interface can also be overwhelming the first time the program is started. Both programs are favourites I've used for years, yet I learn new features and ways to accomplish things continually. There's enough similarity between the programs that learning enough of both to be productive isn't difficult.

There are as many ways to use both programs in conjunction as there are artists who use them. Most artists will have multiple workflows when moving between programs, depending on the painting they're creating. The following workshop isn't meant to show the only way or even the best way to use both programs. It shows one way of creating a digital painting using Painter and Photoshop. Hopefully this workshop will inspire you to use Painter and Photoshop together. If you already use both, maybe it'll give you some new techniques to try.

Artist PROFILE

Don Seegmiller

COUNTRY: US



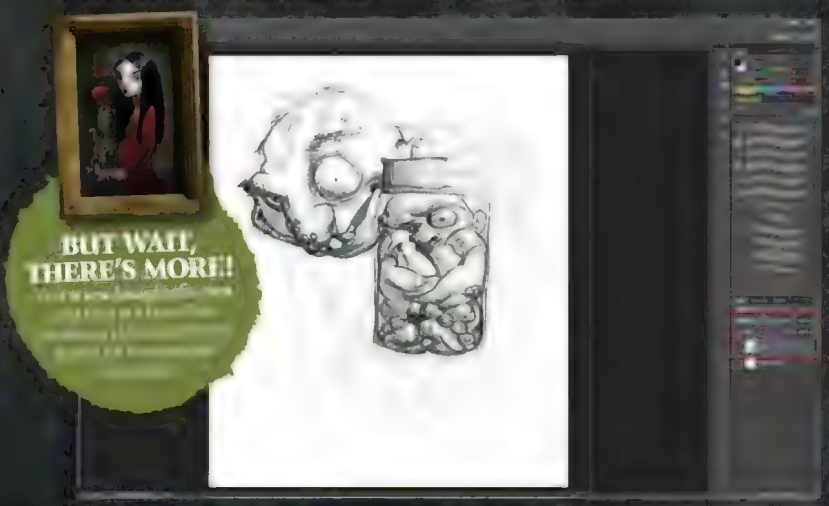
DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

1 Compatibility

There are several things you need to understand before working with these two programs. There are some incompatibilities between Painter and Photoshop. Photoshop's Layer Styles won't import into Painter. You'll need to rasterise any Layer Styles you apply in Photoshop. Some Painter specific techniques won't export into Photoshop, including Dynamic Plugins, Impasto brush effects and Digital Watercolour. However, you'll soon discover how to work around the incompatibilities.

2 The sketch

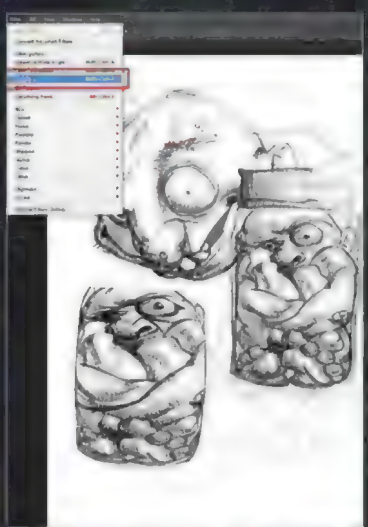
The sketch of the mad doctor holding the jar and the doodle of the figure squeezed into a jar were from different sketchbooks and I combine them for this painting. I scan both at print resolution (300DPI) and then open the two sketches in Photoshop. The character in the jar is selected, copied and pasted into the mad doctor sketch. I then change the Blending Mode of the jar layer to Multiply and position the layer at the correct place on top of the original sketch.



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

PRO SECRETS

Resize brushes



3 Tweak the jar

I want there to be more distortion to the character in the jar. I duplicate the jar layer several times and using the Liquify tool I distort the character until I get the look I want. I merge the jar layer down onto the character layer. I separate the figure from the background using the Magic Wand tool by selecting the background, inverting the selection, cutting the foreground from the background, and pasting the foreground back onto a new layer.


Gregory and his twin



Shortcut
Merge layers in Photoshop
Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E (PC)
Shift+Cmd+Alt+E (Mac)
All visible layers merge into a new layer, with originals intact.

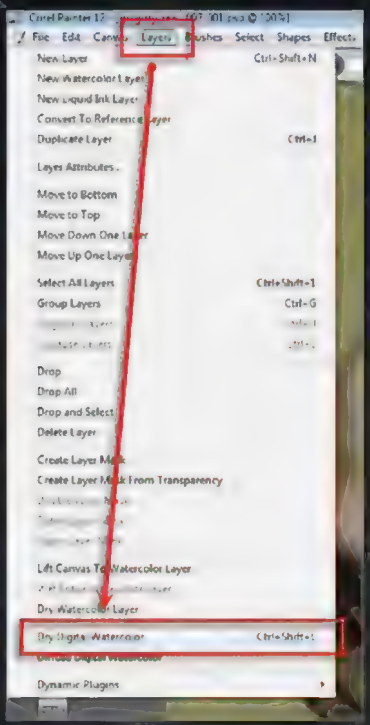
4 Set the values

The initial value statement may be the most important part of the painting process. Here is where I decide on a light source, how dark or light I want the whole image, and so on. I create a new layer above the Gregory layer, change the Blending Method to Multiply, and paint lights and darks over the Gregory sketch. I paint the light and dark values on the background layer, then merge the Gregory layer and the value layer. The resulting image has two layers with the values of the painting established.

6 Dry the colours

When I'm finish painting the first colours I dry the paint using Painter's Dry Digital Watercolor command, found in the Layers menu.

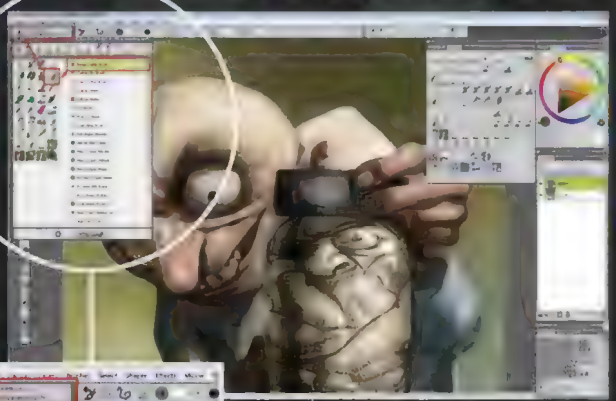


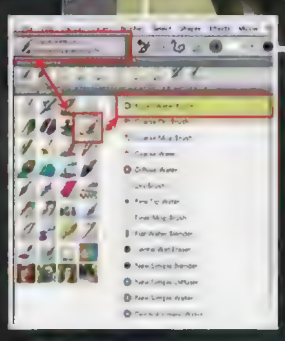


7 Brush selection

I like using as few brushes as possible on any given painting. It speeds up the process. The rest of the painting is done using the Opaque Round brush. This is a default brush that's found in the Oils category. I like the bristly look and subtle blending as I paint. I resize, tweak the Opacity and adjust the features of the brush as necessary. When I want a brush that blends the colours I use the Grainy Water brush found in the Blenders category. I paint directly on the Gregory layer and the background.

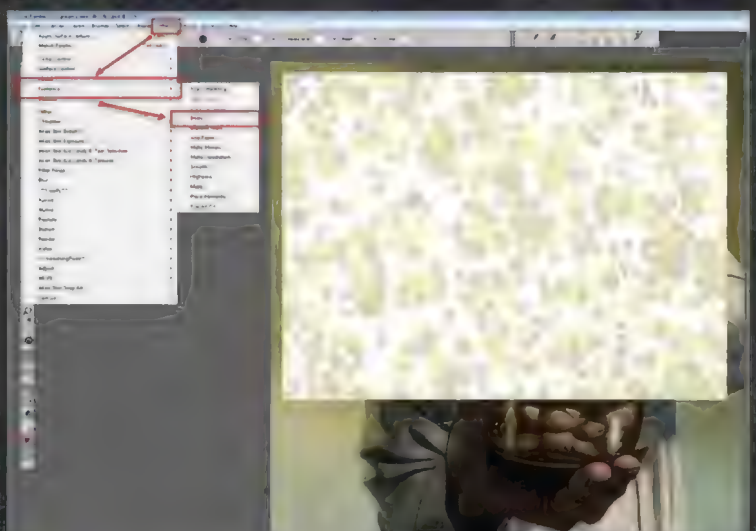






5 Add colour

Now I begin to add colour. This can be done using either program. I switch to Painter for this particular image. I begin blocking in the main colours of the face and figure using the Broad Water Brush. This is a default Painter brush and can be found in the Digital Watercolour Category. I use the same brush to paint the colour onto the background.

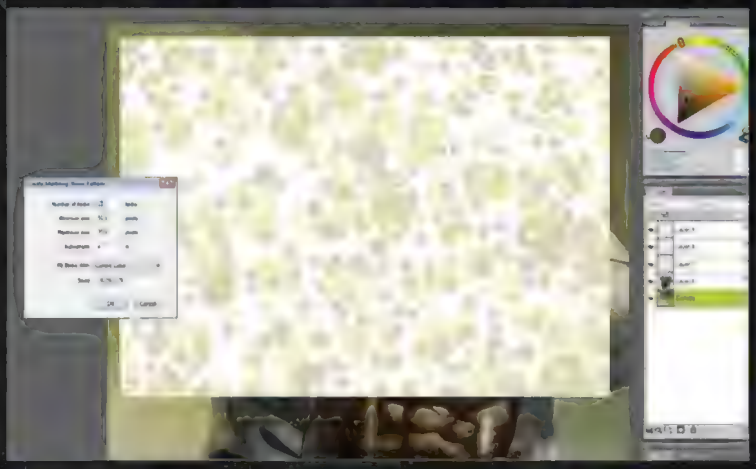


8 Apply texture and effects

I want to add textural details to the piece, starting with some age spots on top of Gregory's head. In Painter I create a new layer, select a rectangular area on the layer that covers Gregory's head completely, fill the selection with white and duplicate the layer several times. From the Effects menu I select the Esoterica category and Blobs effect.

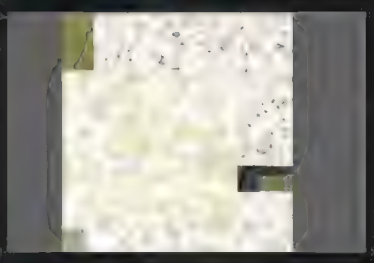
9 Using Blobs

In the Blobs panel I choose the number of blobs (anywhere from the default 40 up to 200). I set the minimum and maximum size (20 to 40). I pick the colour of the blobs using the Colour Wheel or the Dropper from various areas on Gregory.



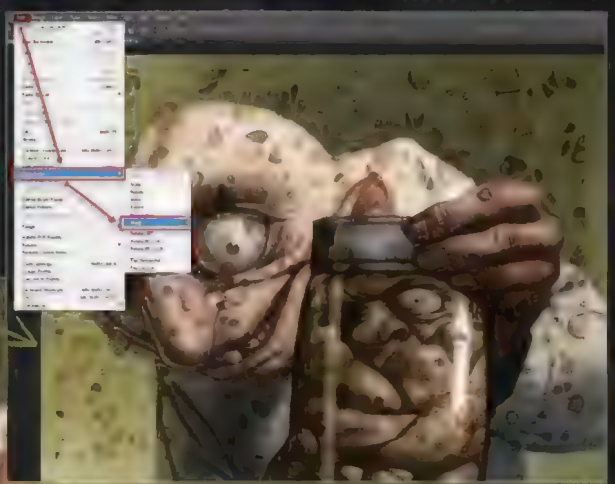
10 Repeating blobs

I click OK and the white rectangle is filled with a random arrangement of blobby shapes. I repeat this process three or four times on each layer with a white rectangle. Here you can see each of the three blobby layers created.



11 And back in Photoshop...

I move back into Photoshop to place the textures on Gregory's head. I change each of the blob layers' blending modes to Multiply. I then select the Warp Transform tool. I push and pull the blobby layer until it generally conforms to the shape of the head. When I'm pleased with the transformation I press Return and commit the change.



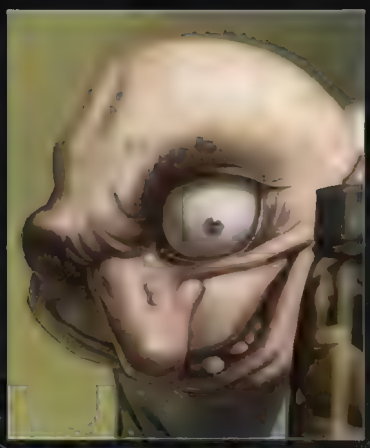




PRO SECRETS

Save your work

With the lower cost of computer storage mediums there's no reason not to save your work often. I make it a habit to save any image I'm working on incrementally (adding a numerical suffix) whenever I'm going to make a major change and just after the change. I'll also set an alarm to go off every 30 minutes or less reminding me to save my work. It's not unusual for me to have 100 or more saved versions of a painting. When the project is done, I decide if I want to keep all the incremental versions or just a few and burn everything onto a DVD.



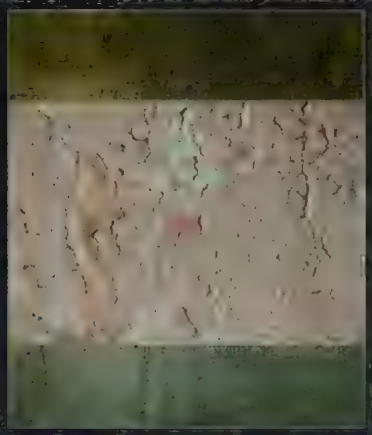
12 Tidy up the process

I use the Eraser and remove blobs from the nose, eyes, background and lower part of the face. I also remove some of the blobs in areas where light is striking the head directly. I lower the Opacity of the whole layer so that the blobs are visible but not overpowering.



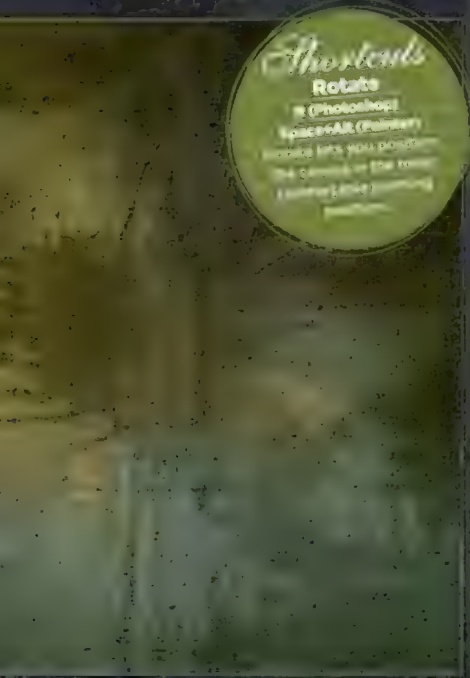
13 Make Gregory look shadowy

I want to darken the shadow side of the figure. To do this I load a selection based on the Gregory layer transparency and create a new layer with the active selection. I then change the blending mode of the new layer to Multiply and use a large Airbrush and Eraser to darken the shadow side of the figure.



14 Apply textures to the background

One of the best ways to add interest is with texture. In Photoshop I begin layering textures over the background of the image. I place them by dragging files from my textures folder onto the image. The texture is placed above the active layer with a transformation box around it. I drag the transformation handles into the corners till the new texture covers the background, and then I press Return. The resulting layer is a Smart Object, which I rasterise.



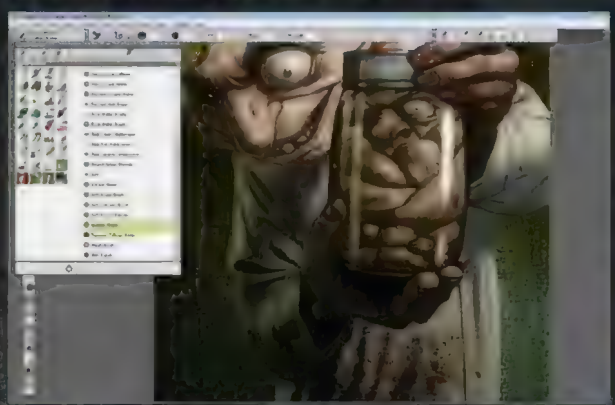
15 Unify the textures

With all the textures loaded I experiment with the Blending Modes and opacity of each layer to achieve a nice, complex surface. I use the Eraser to remove or soften portions of the textures that may look out of place. I duplicate the background layer, place it above all the other texture layers and change its Blending Mode to Color, to ensure consistent colour harmony.

16 Introduce textures using brushes

Without adding texture to the figure I run the risk of the foreground and background looking inconsistent. I can use the same technique to add textural elements to the figure as well as using custom texture brushes. On a new layer above Gregory I add some blood to Gregory's lab coat using a custom brush that looks like an ink splatter and a dull red colour. I experiment with different Blending Modes and opacities until the colour and value of the blood looks correct. I erase any blood splats painted on to areas surrounding the lab coat.



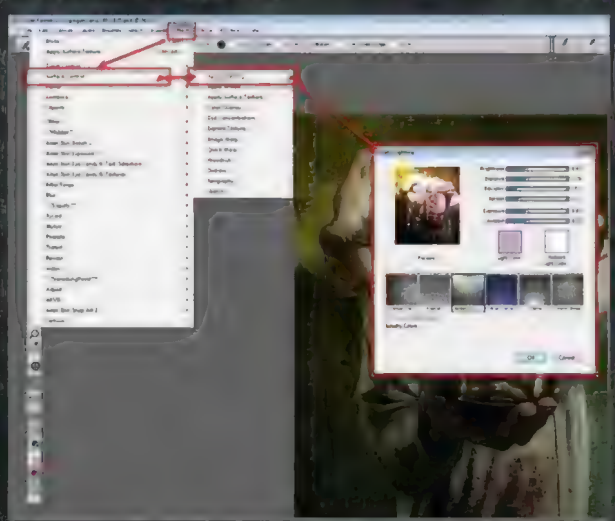


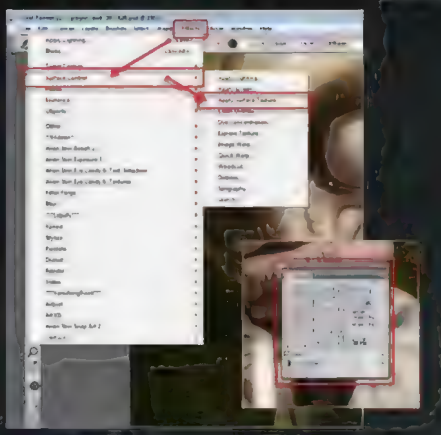
17 Back to Painter

I move back to Painter and choose the Spatter Water brush from the Digital Watercolor category and apply more blood stains to Gregory's lab coat. This brush diffuses nicely into the active paper texture. Using a variety of brushes I clean up the edges of the figure. When it all looks good I drop the Gregory layer onto the background.

18 Almost done

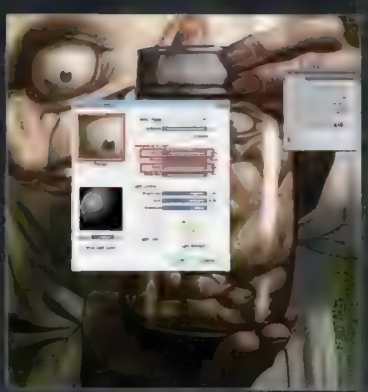
To add some subtle colour variety I copy and paste the whole image onto itself and use a Lighting Effect in the Effects/Surface Control menu. In the Add Lighting palette I choose the Splashy Color effect, changing the blue light colour to violet while increasing the light distance. I increase the distance of the yellow light. I apply the effect. I lower the Opacity of the top layer to about 20 per cent so that just a touch of the colour and brightness shows on the bottom image. I drop the layer onto the background.





19 Finishing touch

The final step is to add some canvas texture to the painting. This is easily done in Painter. I copy and paste the image onto itself and make sure the new layer is active. In the Paper palette I select a custom paper texture that resembles artists' canvas. On the new layer I apply the Apply Surface Texture effect. This effect is located in the Effects/Surface Control menu.

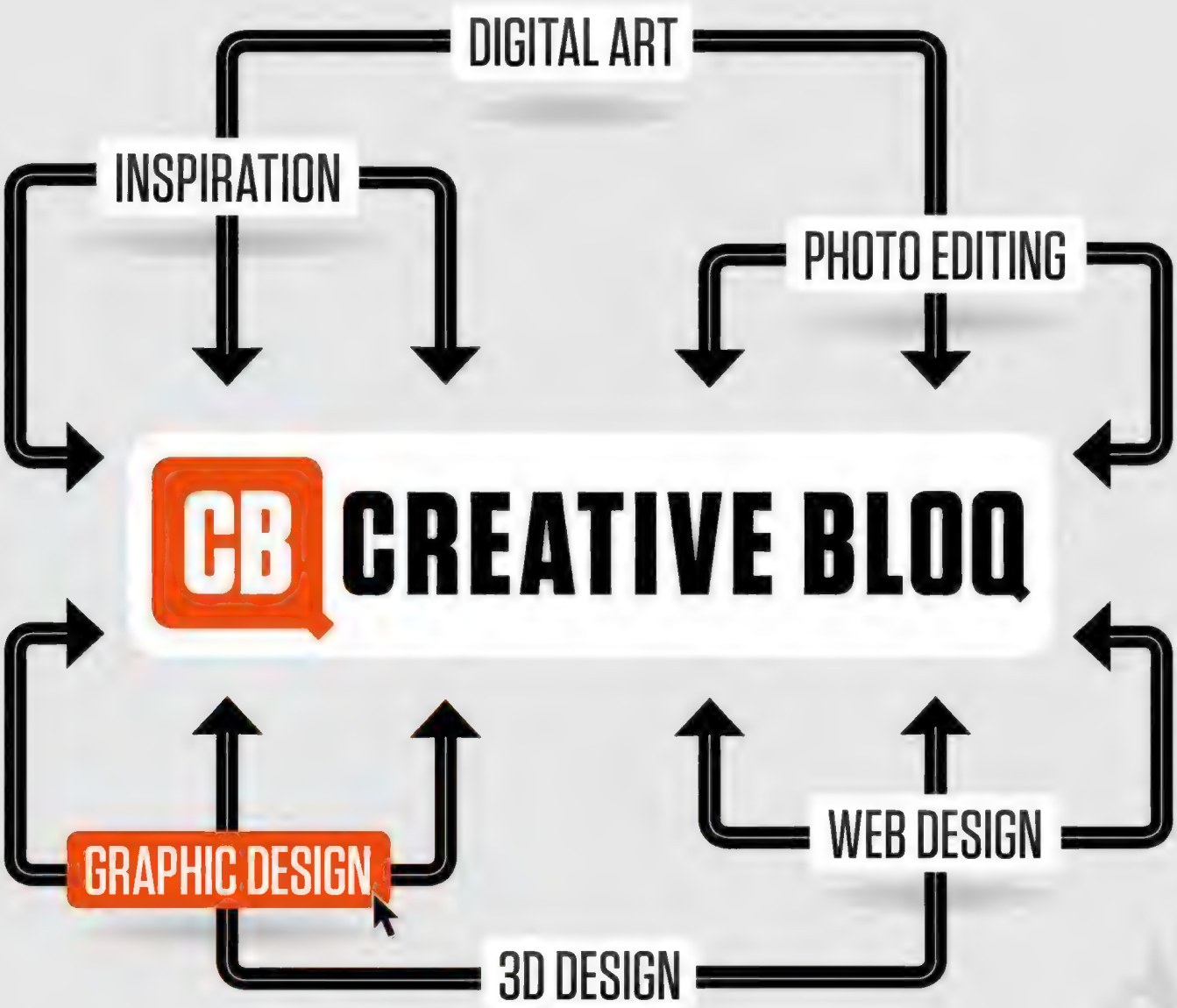


20 Final tweaks

In the Apply Surface Texture options box I lower the shine slider to zero and the amount to about 20 per cent. I look at the preview. When satisfied, I apply the effect. Finally I drop the layer and the painting is finished.



YOUR DAILY DOSE OF DESIGN TIPS & INSPIRATION



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Next month in...

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

Electrify your fantasy art

New workshops to spark your imagination and help improve your digital painting!



ISSUE 96 ON SALE *Friday 26 April*



Anna Steinbauer reveals her techniques to bringing fabric to life! **www.annasteinbauer.com**

Plus

Paint like a legend
John Stanko channels Frank Frazzeta to compose a classic fantasy scene.

Art of storytelling
Successfully layer your art with narrative elements. Olly Lawson explains all.

Release the kraken!
Artist Kelley Harris reveals how to paint a complex, writhing sea creature.

Lay of the land
Use traditional techniques to enhance your digital fantasy art landscapes.

Learn from a legend
Classic fantasy artist Joe Jusko explains how he paints Vampirella.



Photoshop

DESIGN A BIKE FOR A MANGA SETTING

It's time to get your manga motor runnin' as **Sunil Pant** explores 3D sketching techniques to create a unique, larger-than-life motorbike



In this workshop I'll be designing a motorbike. The challenge here is to come up with something that'll feel modern and yet have a mix of retro-fitted parts, so it doesn't look too much like a science fiction work of wonder

I intend to keep my design grounded in reality, using retro-fitted technology such as a turbine exhaust strapped to the back of the bike with four-to-six exhaust pipes jutting out. It's important as a designer to lay down certain parameters for your design before you start to sketch them in 3D. In this case I'm using SketchUp as my main tool for execution of the design.

Setting up parameters and asking myself questions such as 'What is motivating certain aspects of this design?' or 'How can I incorporate references from different eras?' helps me immensely. Whatever design aesthetic you choose to follow, the principles of design remain the same. A good design has a simple and strong silhouette; is consistent in all its forms and every detail; has a pleasing appearance; tells you what the function of that object is; and is clear and understandable.

Artist PROFILE

Sunil Pant

COUNTRY: US



Sunil is a freelance 3D artist who's worked on high-profile film projects such as Iron Man 2 and Megamind.

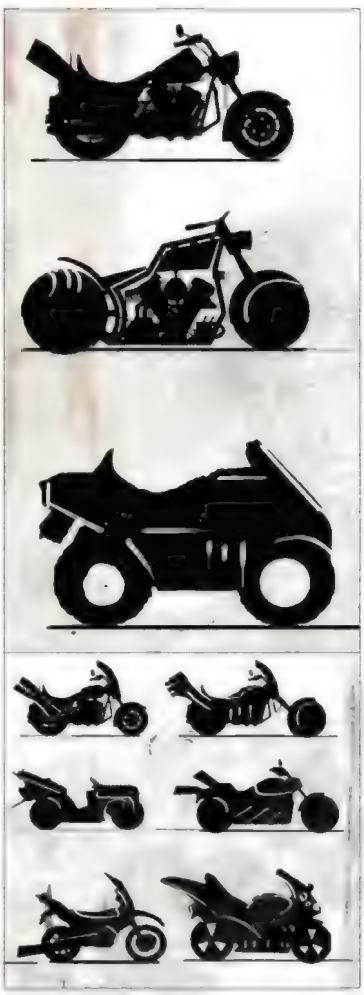
www.bit.ly/ifx-spant

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/ifx-3d-bike

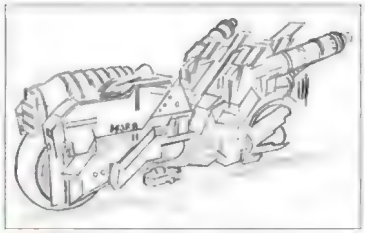
1 Research and reference

I do as much research as possible on the subject depending on the time I have for that particular design. My belief is that you can never do enough research! This phase of design is arguably one of the most important phases of design. So, to start my manga motorbike design I lay out all of my reference images of bikes from different eras, and since I already know I want to go a little way down the Akira/Blade Runner route, I know I'll be painting the bike red at the end of the 3D sketching stage.



2 Thumbnail sketches

I like getting my ideas down on paper quickly. While doing thumbnails I make sure I have a variety in my shapes and forms. It's liberating to just draw as many shapes as I can without spending any more than between five and seven minutes on each one. These are sketches I do just to explore my designs and shapes. Because they're not likely to be used for presentation they can be as rough, as big or as tiny as I like. At this point I also have all my references in front of me, just to give some context to all my doodles.



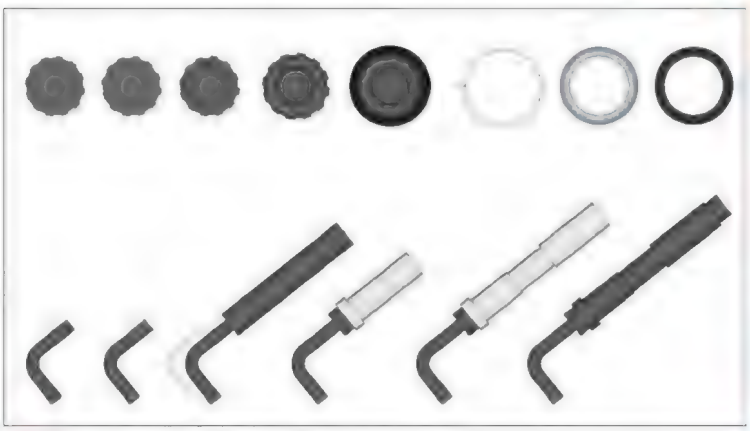
3 Refine the sketches

Once my sketches are complete and my ideas processed, I do a layout drawing over a 3D blockout of the thumbnail that I think is the most interesting and has a simple yet strong visual theme. I'm not too concerned with all the details at this stage. I approach this stage almost like one of my oil paintings, where I apply a few gesture strokes to the canvas, to give a rough idea to the viewer of the details to come. At the moment I'm just concerned with the overall shape, proportion and scale of the motorbike, and how it relates to the forms along its surface.



4 Begin the 3D design

Now I switch tack. This is where I do most of my designing. I like using SketchUp as a tool to figure out any proportion and scale issues. I start to block out the bike in simple shapes, starting with the main shape of the bike, which in this case is the body, before adding the rear exhausts to get an overall feel for the bike's design and proportions.



5 Building the parts separately

Doing this in SketchUp is all about cutting and extruding forms. I build out parts such as the wheels and the main frame of the bike in separate files using the Circle, Scale and the Extrude tools. I've introduced headlights as their own entity at the front of the bike, which I'll later kit bash into my main frame. The exhausts will be fitted in the same way. As a design element the exhaust pipes in the rear bottom side have flap-like structures that read as though they're part of the secondary motion when the bike starts.

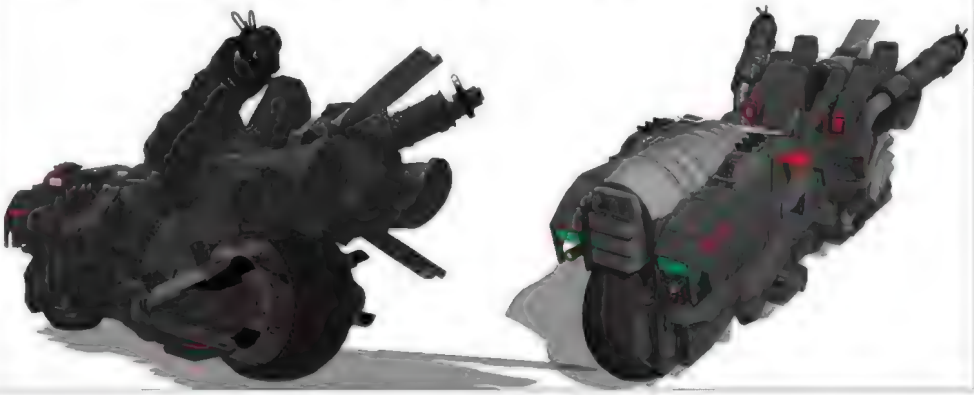
6 Building the headlights

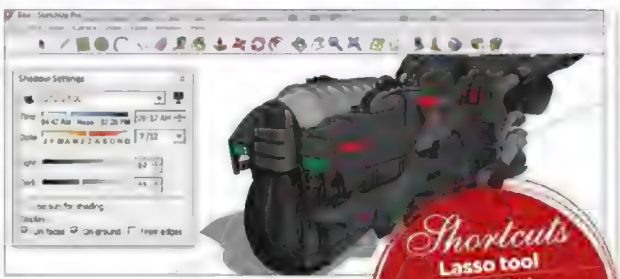
I now go in and build the structure in which my headlights would sit. It's important to remember not to add any details until the overall shapes and their relation with each other have been figured out. You could use this as a general note for the overall design as well. Don't jump into details just yet. Remember, this stage is all about the overall shape.



7 Adding details

A neat shortcut I use to duplicate objects in SketchUp quickly is to hold down Ctrl and the Move tool. This comes in useful when working on details. And now that I'm satisfied with the overall shape (after a few tweaks and proportional changes), I start to add in the details of bike's handles, the rear view mirrors and other techy looking features over the bike's surface. Notice that even though at this stage my design already looks detailed, there are still repeating shapes and forms within those details, so a viewer's eye can quickly recognise what that shape or form is, rather than loading my design with arbitrary details that don't make any sense.





Shortcuts

Lasso tool

L (PC & Mac)

I use this shortcut to mask out my shapes for painting. This makes the painting process much quicker.

8 Adding shadows

This step in SketchUp is simple because it works in real time. First I go to Window>Shadow>Shadow Settings. You can play around with the time and date settings, and see what works best for your designs. I don't have a set rule that I follow, apart from making sure my design doesn't look flat by having too much shadow going on.



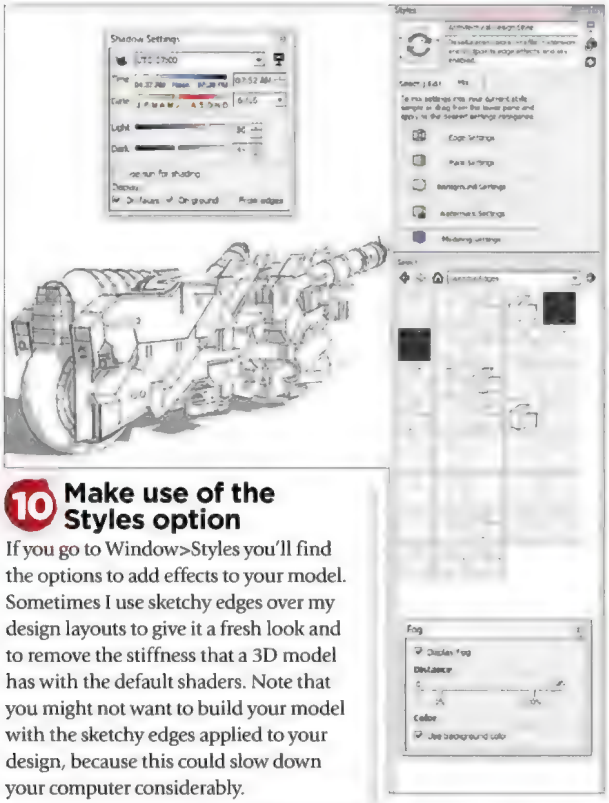
9 Introducing fog

Fog in SketchUp is a quick way to add some atmospheric depth to the design if it's an environment or, in this case, a design to be painted into an environment. So, go to Window> Fog>Display fog to find the options for adding atmosphere. I normally play around with these settings to either blur out the horizon line in the distance, or just take a screen grab of my design with some atmospheric depth to it.

PRO SECRETS

Handling stray edges

Remember to always delete any stray edges in SketchUp to avoid problems while you convert your file from SKP to OBJ format. I generally like keeping my models clean so there are no floating or stray edges. Once I have my design complete I take screengrabs and turn it into a silhouette in Photoshop, just to make sure that my silhouette is still looking interesting.



10 Make use of the Styles option

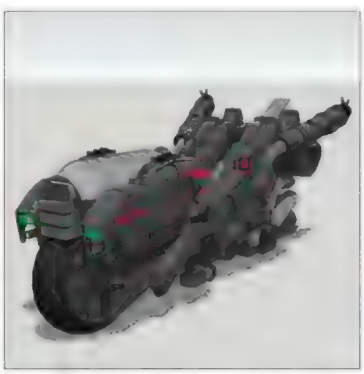
If you go to Window>Styles you'll find the options to add effects to your model. Sometimes I use sketchy edges over my design layouts to give it a fresh look and to remove the stiffness that a 3D model has with the default shaders. Note that you might not want to build your model with the sketchy edges applied to your design, because this could slow down your computer considerably.



Shortcuts
Gradient tool
G (PC & Mac)
The gradient is a good way to pull your model off a 2D background

12 Exporting from SketchUp

Once I'm happy with the look of the bike in 3D form I then take a snapshot of the bike in high resolution to paint on in Photoshop. Alternatively, go to File>Export>2D Graphics to save your file out as a JPEG and then further work on it on Photoshop or another painting program. I usually save my images at 4,000x2,028. This is approximately the size I work on, so there's not much scaling once I import, and no drop in quality.



11 Mental Ray render

I use a 3D program to render out my SketchUp file from Photoshop. At this stage you can use whatever 3D software you're comfortable with. In the past I've used Mental Ray in Maya to paint things over. Once I've imported the file in OBJ form from SketchUp I import it into Maya and quickly drop materials on to it, just to give it that reflectivity and shadow direction that'll then guide me when I do a paintover in Photoshop. There are plenty of times when I just take a screen grab of my design in SketchUp and then paint over it directly. Do whatever feels comfortable to you and what style you're going for. Ultimately, a 3D render looks like a 3D render, so if you're looking for something more painterly I'd paint over the SketchUp model directly using the 3D line drawing of SketchUp just as guides and putting it on a Multiply layer in Photoshop.



PRO SECRETS

Smoothing your objects

Because SketchUp is such a line-based tool, one way to smoothen out your objects on SketchUp is by going on to the Windows option and hitting Soften Edges by selecting the object you'd like to round out and smooth. This doesn't work as well as the Smooth option in Maya, but it helps for rough layouts within SketchUp.

13 Photoshop paintover

I start laying in flat colours first: in this case the red of the frame of the bike and chrome for the exhausts. The flat colours can then be set on a Multiply layer to take advantage of your 3D underlay. I quickly add a gradient layer of grey to give the feel of a separation between the object and the background. I then mask out my object by hitting L for the Lasso tool. Once I have the object layer in Mask mode I can then focus on painting the bike without affecting the background. Again, in this image, I've used the background gradient as only a mode of separation, whose only purpose is to showcase the bike design.

14 Presentation

After I've taken all the screen grabs I need of my bike design in SketchUp in JPEG format, I use Photoshop as a tool to put together a good and clear presentation of the design. And we're done!



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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

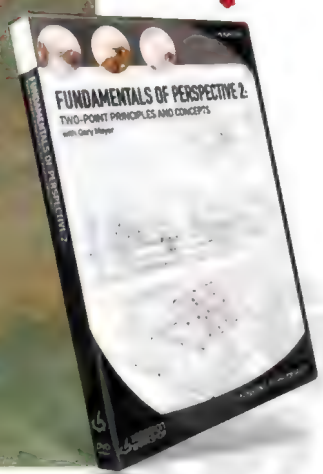
ImagineFX Reviews

Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the IFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...



11 PRODUCTS ON TEST





SOFTWARE

106 ArtRage 4
We get our hands on software that emulates traditional art materials at a staggeringly low price.

BOOKS

108 New reads
The Art of Dead Space; 101 Top Tips from Professional Manga Artists; Draw Manga Step-By-Step On Your Computer.

TRAINING

109 Fundamentals of Perspective 2
Gary Meyer explains vanishing points and foreshortening.

VIDEO GAMES

110 New games
BioShock Infinite; God of War: Ascension; Gears of War: Judgment.

FILMS

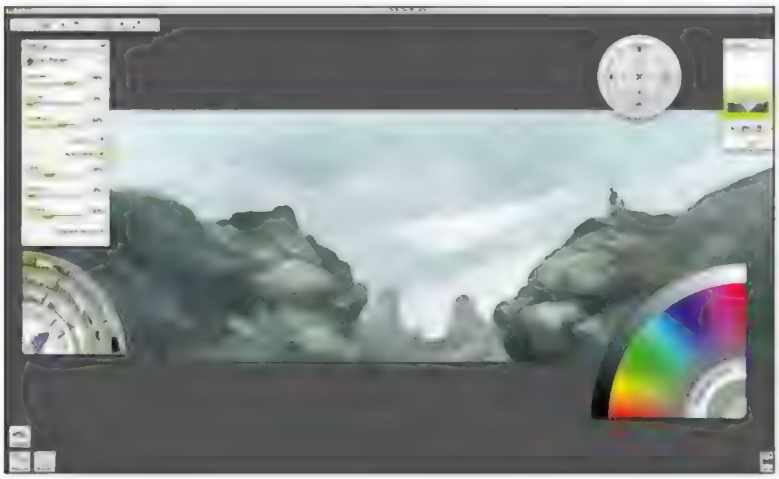
111 New movies
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey; Life of Pi; Twilight: Breaking Dawn – Part 2.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Jon Hodgson painted this striking elf character in ArtRage. He creates most of his images from scratch using the software.



Adjusting a few simple sliders leads to less uniformed, digital-looking brush marks.

ArtRage 4

ALL THE RAGE Software that emulates traditional art materials at a staggeringly low price – what's not to like?

Price $50 **Company** Ambient Design **Web** www.artrage.com **Contact** Via website

We've always had a love affair with ArtRage. If you're an artist accustomed to traditional media looking to jump into digital painting, then ArtRage is ImagineFX's recommended application. It's accessible, focused and intuitive.

That's not to say it's limited, though. Each new iteration has been expanded to provide tools for both traditional and digital artists, and Ambient Design has stayed true to its development ethos with ArtRage 4.

The core of every painting application is its brush engine – especially one that emulates traditional media – and in ArtRage 4 we're treated to further enhancements. The standard brush presets are still here, which make for a great starting point when defining a certain characteristic. Now we have more sliders that offer us even greater control, typified by the Oil brush that now enables you to tweak Aspect, Rotation and Stiffness.

Other new features include Paint Symmetry, which makes it possible to draw in either a mirrored or rotational fashion. You can assign the axis angle and number of segments as well as its location on the canvas, making it a great tool for creating character, vehicle and weapon thumbnails. Because it's applying the properties of each tool you're using it's also a great way to shortcut pattern designs for clothing. The Transform tool has also received a bit of a buff: each anchor point can be manipulated individually, allowing for perspective corrections.

The biggest improvements are in workflow management, with the star of the show being the new Workbench. It's a dock-style toolbar where you add, store and access all the relevant tools and components used in a specific painting. It's a combination of the new Toolbox and the fundamental ArtRage tools and menu options, completely freeing up your workspace. With that extra screen real-estate you can take full advantage of two more additions: Scraps and Views. Views gives you a separate window view of your painting at a designated scale, so you can see how your detailing is affecting the painting. Scraps is like having an extra canvas to demo ideas and mix colours.

> **"The biggest improvements are in workflow management, with the star of the show being the new Workbench"**

The only real criticism of ArtRage 4 is the UI. It looks a little tired, but adopt Workbench and it becomes obsolete. When working with large files certain tools can lag, but this is common even with Adobe Photoshop's Mixer brush. We can overlook these minor quibbles because one of ArtRage's biggest plus points is price. At £33 it seems rude not to add this adept package to your digital tool box.

DETAILS

Features
- Paint Symmetry
- Scraps and Views
- Workbench mode
- Toolbox panel
- Gradient fills
- Wacom stylus features
- Clone tool
- Non-uniform transformations

System Requirements
PC: Windows XP+
Mac: 10.6 or later (Intel Macs only)
512MB RAM, 1,024x768 display

Rating

ARTIST INTERVIEW

JON HODGSON

Long-time ArtRage user Jon gives us his opinion of the latest version

How integral is ArtRage to your workflow?
I use ArtRage every single day for work. It completely replaced Corel Painter in my workflow a couple of years back. I create most images from scratch in it.

Why would you recommend ArtRage to other artists?
It's very user friendly. It does the very best traditional media emulation currently out there, and it's really cheap.

What features impressed you the most in ArtRage 4?
The addition of bristle stiffness control was something I really wanted in ArtRage 3, so it's great to get it in 4. Workbench mode is yet to push its way into my workflow, but it will.

Are there any new features you didn't expect to adopt in the latest version, but have?
The Transform controls. I generally switch to Photoshop to do that kind of image manipulation, but the new features in this area have really impressed me.

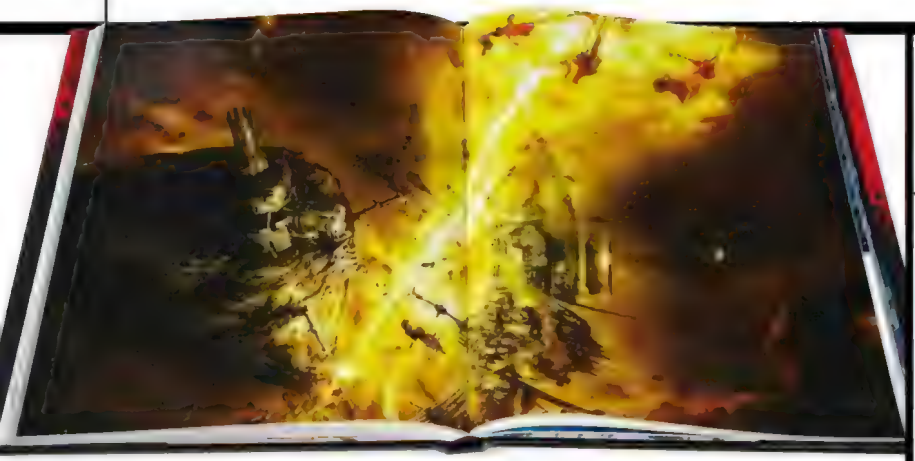
How does ArtRage 4's advanced Wacom Stylus support benefit your work?
I have a couple of Wacom art pens lying around, so the integration of rotation control gives me a couple of benefits. Being able to turn the Oil brush as I'm working is an obvious one. Different styluses 'remembering' the colour and tool you were using is a really cool addition as well. Switching between tools feels as simple as switching stylus.

Do you think there is any element that's still missing from ArtRage?
Something I'd love is an ability to modulate colour on the arrow keys or gaming keypad. So maybe for example value on the X axis and saturation on the Y.



Jon has worked on Dungeons & Dragons, Warhammer and much more. He also wrote Fantasy Art for Beginners.

www.jonhodgson.com



The Art of Dead Space

DEATH STAR The horror sci-fi franchise's characters get thoroughly eviscerated, all in the name of art

Author Martin Robinson **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30
Web www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Electronic Art's Dead Space survival horror games have enjoyed an enduring legacy. The first release, which shambled menacingly out of the shadows in 2008, did a decent job of establishing the Dead Space universe's mythology. The second and third parts cranked up the creepy suspense. The series' appeal lies in its canny knowledge of cinematic sci-fi horror – touching on Alien, Event Horizon and The Thing – combined with its powerful art direction.

This 'art of' book covers all three entries in the game series, as well as its spin-off graphic novels. It's certainly not for the faint-hearted. It spews the guts of the franchise all over the page and explores the visceral horror that's become the title's trademark. As author Martin Robinson explains in his introduction, we're "three titles in, and the series has lost none of its power to shock."

Most of the Dead Space games are spent with protagonist Isaac Clarke's upper back filling the screen, so appropriately the book begins by looking at this easily dismembered character. His spacesuit's design was a challenge for the artists, who needed to create armour that looked vulnerable, yet able to withstand the harsh environment of outer space.



Other human characters are covered, and then the book moves on to the settings and environments in the games, such as the first installment's gothic spaceship the USG Ishimura, and the vehicles and dwellings of the Scientology-esque Unitologists. It's pointed out that ribbing is a frequent design motif of both costumes and vehicles, and one that instantly makes everything feel a little more necrosed and sinister.

Where the Art of Dead Space comes into its own is in the Necromorphs, which fill the best part of the book. Made of the rearranged flesh of the dead, the art team drew on parasitic fungi and animal anatomy to create Clarke's stomach-churning enemies. "It's tearing apart a person and then putting them back together with different parts," says artist Brett Marting. We couldn't have put it better ourselves...

If you can get past the slightly nauseating nature of the book, there's something for everyone here, from sci-fi character and location design to squirm-inducing horror monsters. We would have liked to see a little more of the evolution of the characters and locations, but this omission is understandable given the vast nature of the Dead Space universe.

RATING

Further reading...

Two different approaches are taken when explaining how to draw manga

101 Top Tips from Professional Manga Artists

Author Sonia Leong
Publisher Ilex **Price** £15
Available Now
RATING



For this guide to all things manga, Sonia Leong has recruited 12 fellow mangakas to contribute well-written guides to just about every element of the genre. It begins with the basics of equipment and tools, before moving on to character design, backgrounds and illustrations.

The first two-thirds of the book concentrates on traditional tools, with digital elements being covered towards the end. This gives the book's route a firm grounding in conventional manga. The contributors certainly know what they're talking about, too, and continually reference classic artists and unique manga facets such as Chibi. It is at once in-depth and hugely accessible, and an essential reference book for all manga artists.

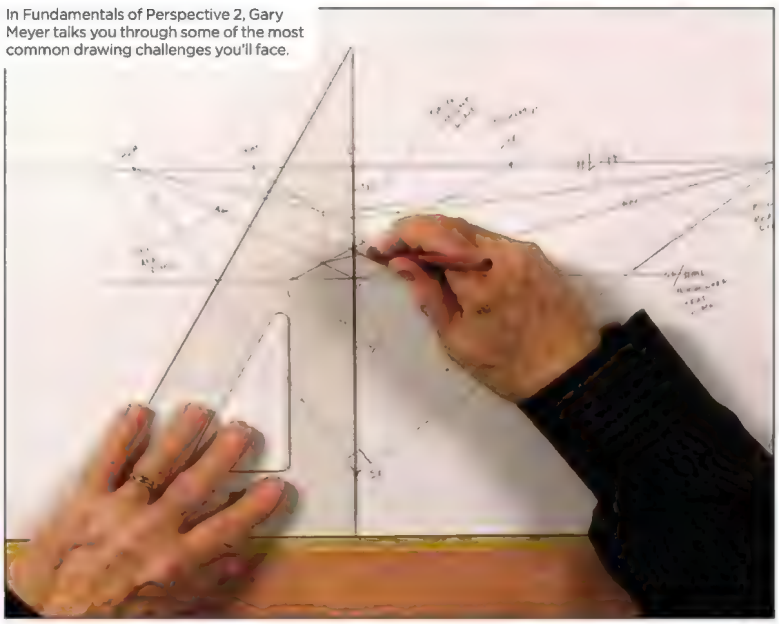
Draw Manga Step-By-Step On Your Computer

Author Steve and Ghy Sampson
Publisher Ilex **Price** £10
Available Now
RATING



An interesting approach to the tutorial tome, Draw Manga... is essentially paint-by-numbers for the 21st century. You begin with a simple piece of line art, which can be downloaded from the web, then use Photoshop's colouring and effects tools to bring it to life, and end with the image on the cover.

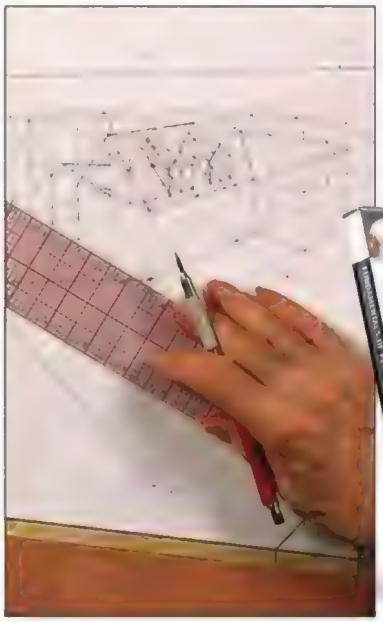
The title's a bit of a misnomer: you certainly don't learn how to draw manga directly, and it doesn't cover anatomy or composition, but you may pick up some tips for your sketches. As a Photoshop tutorial it serves its purpose, and you'll find yourself using the majority of the software's features to create the final image. It's worth picking up if you're new to creating art in Photoshop, but it's pretty limited otherwise.



In Fundamentals of Perspective 2, Gary Meyer talks you through some of the most common drawing challenges you'll face.

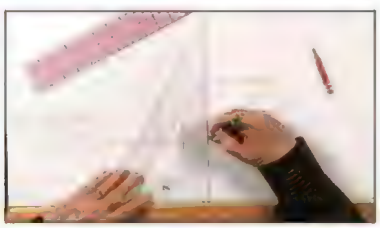


Gary explains how to take details from a plan view into your perspective drawing.



You'll see how to assemble complex constructions from simple block forms.







Fundamentals of Perspective 2

FROM EVERY ANGLE Enhance your knowledge of vanishing points and foreshortening with illustrator and instructor Gary Meyer

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** $49 **Format** DVD/Download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

Gary Meyer's three-part series for The Gnomon Workshop aims to give you a thorough grounding in the rules of perspective and their application in drawing, giving you the confidence to tackle richer scenes. This second instalment shifts into a different gear compared to the first, looking more at solving common real-world challenges than at underlying principles. If this series represents your introduction to perspective, this new approach may also mark the moment your brain starts to melt.

Once you're dealing with two vanishing points and objects that are more than just simple cubes, such as the house with a sloping roof and extension that Gary draws early on, your drawing can quickly become a cluttered matrix of guidelines and marked points. But take your time with the video chapters and create your own working drawings, and you'll soon find that things fall into place. Gary shows how complicated forms can be broken down into simpler components, making essential measurements easier to work out.

Once the technical aspects start to sink in, the usefulness of Gary's lessons becomes clear. He shows you how to take measurements from plan or elevation blueprints and place them correctly in perspective. And how to tackle everyday situations, including drawing circles and steps or coping with inclining planes. It's knowledge that applies to mythic temples and dystopian cityscapes as well as the more prosaic subjects Gary chooses.

As with the first part, there's far more emphasis on technical considerations than artistic decisions; it's down to you to experiment with the different emotional effects you can achieve. But there's a very useful discussion on how to avoid (or deliberately apply) distorted perspective of the kind you see in wide-angle photography.

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Two-point basics
- Measuring and scale
- Drawing from blueprints
- Plotting ellipses
- Drawing steps
- Working with slopes
- Avoiding distortion

Length
201 minutes

Rating

ARTIST PROFILE
GARY MEYER

Gary is an instructor at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, where he's worked for 23 years. His teaching experience includes illustration, sketching, visual communication, portraiture, architectural design and matte painting. Gary has also taught at Otis College of Art and Design, Universal Studios Design and Development, and the Animation Institute of Los Angeles. His commercial clients include, film studios, Reader's Digest, Random House and Warner Books.



www.garymeyerillustration.net



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BioShock Infinite

FLYING FORTRESS Move from the depths of the ocean to a city in the sky in the latest BioShock game

Format PC, PS3, Xbox 360 **Publisher** 2K **Price** £40 **Available** Now
Web www.bioshockinfinite.com

As BioShock Infinite's development stretched into... well, infinity, art director Nate Wells departed the project to join Uncharted developer Naughty Dog, and the original BioShock's art director, Scott Sinclair, was drafted in to take his place. But Infinite couldn't look less like BioShock. In the new game, darkness is replaced by light, confines are replaced by space and the depths are replaced by the greatest of heights.



The city of Columbia is a flying city suspended from balloons and built to carry the American dream around the world. It's also a massively militarised fortress from which Booker DeWitt must rescue a young girl with unusual abilities. It's a city out of time; it's 1911 and this technology shouldn't exist, nor should the music you'll hear sung by barber-shop quartets and on gramophones – songs by The Beach Boys, Tears for Fears and others.

This was a chance for Nate and his team to design something wholly original and to ask questions nobody ever thought to ask, such as what happens when you rip Main Street, USA, off the map and suspend it at 10,000 feet? What if that street was prepared for war? What if the American dream was co-opted by a zealot preaching racial purity and turning the red, white and blue into racist propaganda? How can all of it seem so credible, yet so wholly unnatural at the same time? How can this place be made to feel as though it shouldn't exist?

Nate and Scott have answers for all those questions, and Infinite is an unrivalled explosion of new ideas, artistry and technology. It's world building at its very best, and a fantasy world unlike anything else around.

RATING ✍✍✍✍✍



The video game asks, what happens when you suspend Main Street, USA, at 10,000 feet?

Also look at...

Bulky space marines and the angry demi-god return, with mixed results



Gears of War: Judgment

Format Xbox 360
Publisher Microsoft
Price £40
Available Out now
RATING ✍✍✍✍

Epic's American team handed the Gears trilogy's prequel to its Polish studio People Can Fly and the Bulletstorm developer has outdone its US counterparts with ease. Judgment is the best Gears ever, but it must be tiring to be an art director when Gears of War's vision is so obvious and iconic: big muscles, even bigger armour and everything has been blown up.

This was Chris Perna's vision back in 2006. Epic's art director made every character a titan, every enemy a lumpen brute. For Judgment, Chris's team worked with People Can Fly and art director, Waylon Brinck, sticking to those themes. They made new sieges and played with randomised enemy spawns. But it looks like Gears with one exception: the amount Waylon's team can put on screen is unprecedented. This, and BioShock Infinite, is Unreal Engine 3 pushed to its limit by two studios that have mastered it.





God of War: Ascension

Format PS3
Publisher Sony
Price £40
Available Out now
RATING ✍✍✍

It's a good month for people who like war, colons signifying the latest instalment, and predictable art. Like Judgment, God of War: Ascension has all three, but unlike Judgment, very little has been done to reshape the game.

So Kratos stomps around ancient Greece beating the eyeballs out of creatures drawn from myth and from the designers' imaginations – more the latter than the former for this one, since Kratos has already killed his way through the cast of Clash of the Titans and Jason and the Argonauts – all brought to life by art director Chris Sutton's team. It's a big, bright, colourful game filled with giant monsters the engine handles with ease, but monsters drawn from Chris's imagination aren't nearly as fascinating as those he draws from myth. Ascension is epic in its visual spectacle, but as a brawler it's been bettered by DMC and Metal Gear Rising this year alone.



Dwarves love food almost as much as they love gold, as Bilbo finds out the hard way.



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The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey

SLOW START New story elements and hit-and-miss CG detract rather than add to the classic children's story

Distributor Warner Bros **Certificate** PG **Price** £15 Blu-ray, £12 **Available** 2 April

Once again Peter Jackson has successfully transferred the essence of a JRR Tolkien book to film. This time around, we're given a lot more besides to mull over.

Like the book, much of The Hobbit is made with kids in mind. It's light and fun, and Martin Freeman's Bilbo is every bit the homebody Hobbit that kids have loved since he first appeared in 1937. Stretching the 310-page book to a trilogy, however, is aimed at adults with epic expectations.



The film is achingly slow off the mark, but after Bilbo is bullied into following a team of singing dwarves to reclaim their past glory and gold, headed by leader Thorin (Richard Armitage), the action becomes familiar-looking fun. Gandalf (Ian McKellen) flatters and chides his half-pint companions through troll attacks and Rivendell respite. Meanwhile, the threat of a mysterious Necromancer offers a darker tone and rumblings of a greater threat.

Although briefly mentioned in the book, the Necromancer and wizard Radagast the Brown have substantial screen time here, but the film's pace is better for it. In contrast, Thorin's orc foe Finbul and his horde of warg riders are totally fabricated and, with their stock 'bad-guy' quality, are totally unwelcome additions.

Just as Tolkien revised The Hobbit after its release to better gel with his increasingly populated world, many of Jackson's changes nod to LotR – all the better for a future six-film Middle-earth Blu-ray marathon!

What's unforgivable is that while Gollum remains entrancing due to Andy Serkis's talents and brand-new motion capture technology, the wargs are hopelessly under-rendered. They're blobs at odds with the otherwise consummate visuals. The hint of Smaug is, however, enough to keep fans primed for the next instalment, set to arrive in cinemas this December.

RATING ✍✍✍

Also look at...

One boy and his tiger in scintillating 3D, and the end of the vampire-lite saga



Life of Pi

Distributor 20th Century Fox
Certificate PG
Price £12
Available 29 April
RATING ✍✍✍✍



The hero of Ang Lee's movie, based on the book by Yann Martel, survives against all the odds. He battles the elements, personal demons and a tiger; he struggles against hunger, fear and loneliness. It's a shame the effects house Rhythm & Hues didn't also survive this movie. Life of Pi is a testament to the skill and artistry of the visual effects talent at a studio that went bankrupt prior to landing an Academy Award for Best Visual Effects, causing some scandal.

The FX team leaves behind an incredible film. One of the best exponents of 3D to date, Ang Lee's tale of an Indian boy shipwrecked on a row boat, caught between the jaws of a hungry tiger and an endless ocean, is a spectacular event. Life of Pi is a beautiful and dramatic film that, amid the splashes of visual effects, manages to stay true to the source material. A film that needs to be watched for all the right reasons, and not chastised for all the wrong ones.

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Twilight: Breaking Dawn, Part 2

Distributor Entertainment One
Certificate 12
Price £10
Available Now
RATING ✍✍



As Kirsten Stewart releases her final sigh as the now not-so-abstinent Bella, so do the many viewers who have followed this heavily haemorrhaging franchise. Sighs of relief, sighs of sadness, but big, purging sighs nonetheless.

Now a red lens-wearing vampire mum, Bella can arm wrestle men with big muscles. No longer the fragile asthmatic of previous films, she's got something at stake other than her virginity: her family. It's the cherry on top of a Twilight cake made from conservative themes such as abstinence, the quiet acceptance of domestic violence, and anti-abortion. Twilight is nothing if not consistent.

Michael Sheen's Aro threatens KStew and RPatz and their baby monster Renesmee (a CGI 'enhanced' Mackenzie Foy), but some viewers will find it hard to feel any threat at all. After all, we all know how this must end. And then it does, thank the gods!

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LOCATION Canada **RECENT PROJECT** Assassin's Creed III, Tyranny of King Washington **WEB** www.ubisoft.com



Thierry tries to keep his fellow artists happy. "I make sure I involve them in the creative process," he says.

All images © Ubisoft

Ubisoft Quebec

LITTLE BROTHER They may be the smaller part of the video game giant's Quebec operations, but this studio likes to think big

Ubisoft's apparent attempt to rule the entirety of the Canadian province of Quebec has a two-pronged approach. In its largest city, Montreal, the company's studio – said to be the biggest in the world – employs over 2,100 workers. Quebec city's branch, 150 miles to the northeast, is significantly smaller with about 300 staff, but just as important to the game company's strategy for world domination.

"I think the life in Quebec with a young family is preferable to bigger cities like Montreal, Paris or London," says Thierry Dansereau, the division's art director. "Here, almost everyone knows who does what. We like to say that Ubisoft Quebec is a games studio with a human dimension, and that is definitely the case."



Despite its sleepier locale and smaller team, the Quebec studio has worked on some of the company's biggest projects of recent years. As well as chipping in on Assassin's Creeds III and Revelations, the studio has single-handedly created Marvel Avengers: Battle for Earth and Might & Magic: Duel of Champions.

Thierry believes this balance gives the studio a unique creative ambience. "We're very lucky to work in a small environment," he says. "But at the same time we work for one of the biggest companies in the industry, enabling us to contribute to some of the biggest games there are. I believe there are not many who can say the same."



Caroline Soucy, a Quebec city native and illustrator at the city's



The conception phase of a game's design is when stress is at its lowest and freedom its highest, says Thierry.



ARTIST INTERVIEW

GRANT HILLIER

Ubisoft Quebec's concept artist on working at the studio



PROJECTS Marvel Avengers: Battle for Earth, Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands

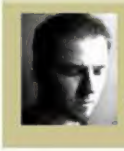
What skills do you bring to Ubisoft Quebec?
Experience and creativity are probably my most valuable contributions. Concept artists live or die by our ability to find creative solutions for character and environment design. The rendering is important too, but I think creativity and originality are of primary importance.

What work are you most proud of so far and why?
Working with the Montreal studio's art director and concept artists on Assassin's Creed III kept me challenged and inspired to work harder on my environment and character concepts. In general terms, however, I feel very proud to be working with some of the best people in the industry.

How much freedom do you have when working on a project?
Typically, the early ideation or concept phase of pre-production is where a concept artist will have the most freedom to explore ideas while working with the creative director and designers. As things progress a clearer vision of the game is defined, which requires more specific details.

What does a portfolio need to get noticed at Ubisoft?
Examples showing a strong proficiency in visual art – the ability to expertly manipulate value, colour, line, contrast, composition and so on – and personal style. So basically, you need to be awesome and stand out from the crowd. Easy, right?

What advice do you have for someone wanting to be a concept artist?
Follow your passion in the type of art and genres you love. Work hard, but don't forget to unplug and see the world – travel, talk to people, read, and be a student of life. The experiences will inspire your art.



Grant is a concept artist who's also done storyboarding, illustration, stop motion animation, comics and more.

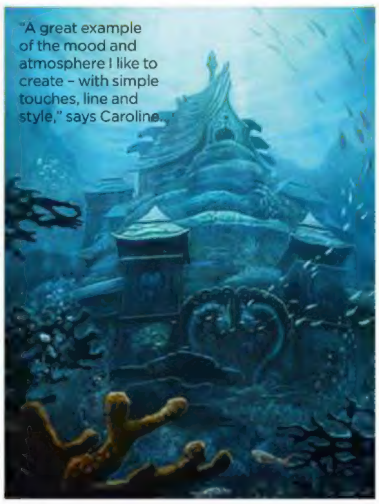
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Photos by Edgar E. Hernandez



Leneil Yu's work helped define the visual direction of Marvel Avengers: Battle for Earth.

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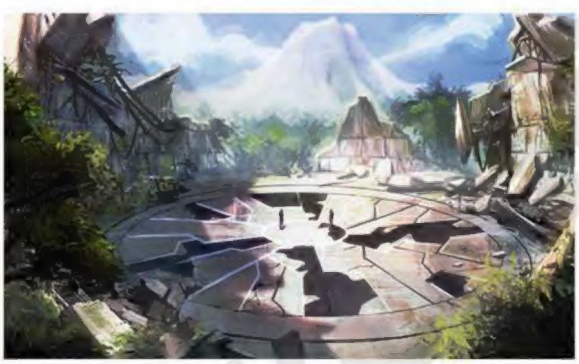


"A great example of the mood and atmosphere I like to create – with simple touches, line and style," says Caroline.



Being North America-based helped Ubisoft Quebec shape Assassin's Creed III's landscapes.

> **"We like to say that Ubisoft Quebec is a games studio with a human dimension"**



A conceptual image for the Savage Land arena. "We wanted to establish layout, lighting and colour palette as well as give the environment modellers some inspiration for textures" says Thierry.

Ubisoft offices, agrees with Thierry. "Working for a major league studio is motivating as well as very challenging, she says. "But there's a lot of respect towards employees. Ubisoft helps us be the best we can, and helps us find the right place in the studio."

Formerly employed as an art director by a small studio in Quebec, Caroline was snapped up by Ubisoft based on her skills as a background illustrator. Once she'd created the illustrations for some 300 virtual playing cards for Might & Magic: Duel of Champions, she moved into the unfamiliar landscape of creating characters. "I went to model drawing sessions each week last autumn to help me improve – and it did help me a lot," she says.

Indeed this level of personal development is at the core of Ubisoft's approach to its artists on staff. "The studio offers external workshops, training and clinics," says Thierry. "Professional growth is important for Ubisoft and we want to make sure that people can evolve inside our studio wall."

The company also gives its employees just the right amount of creative freedom, which is something that Caroline appreciates. "I can make suggestions and bring ideas," she says. "Discussing ideas with other team members adds a lot to my work. Some ideas I wouldn't come across on my own, new ways of seeing my illustrations... that's what makes our team great."

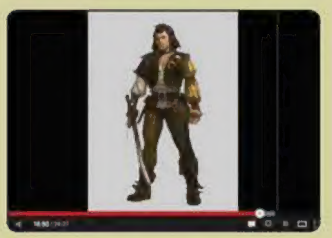
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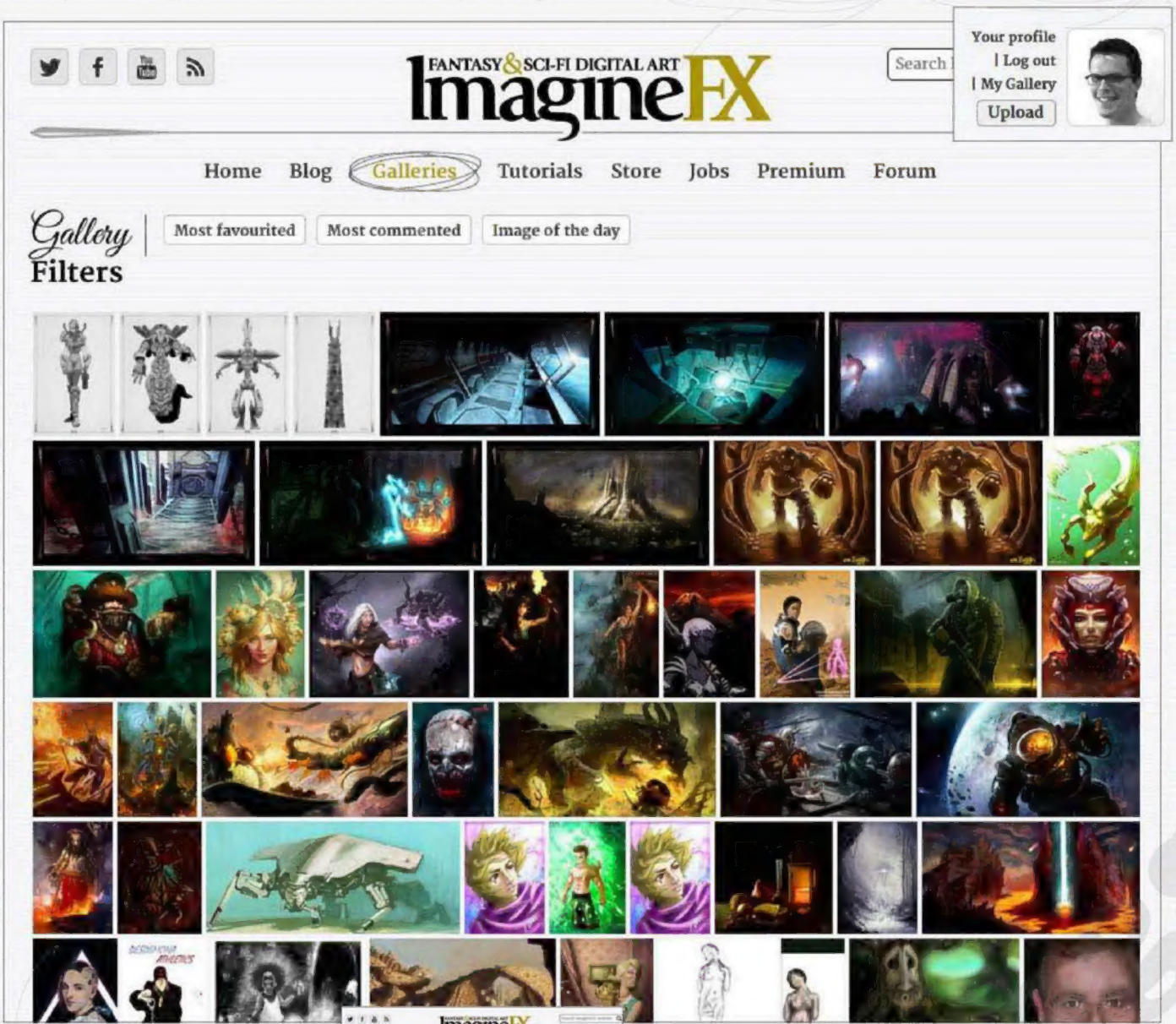
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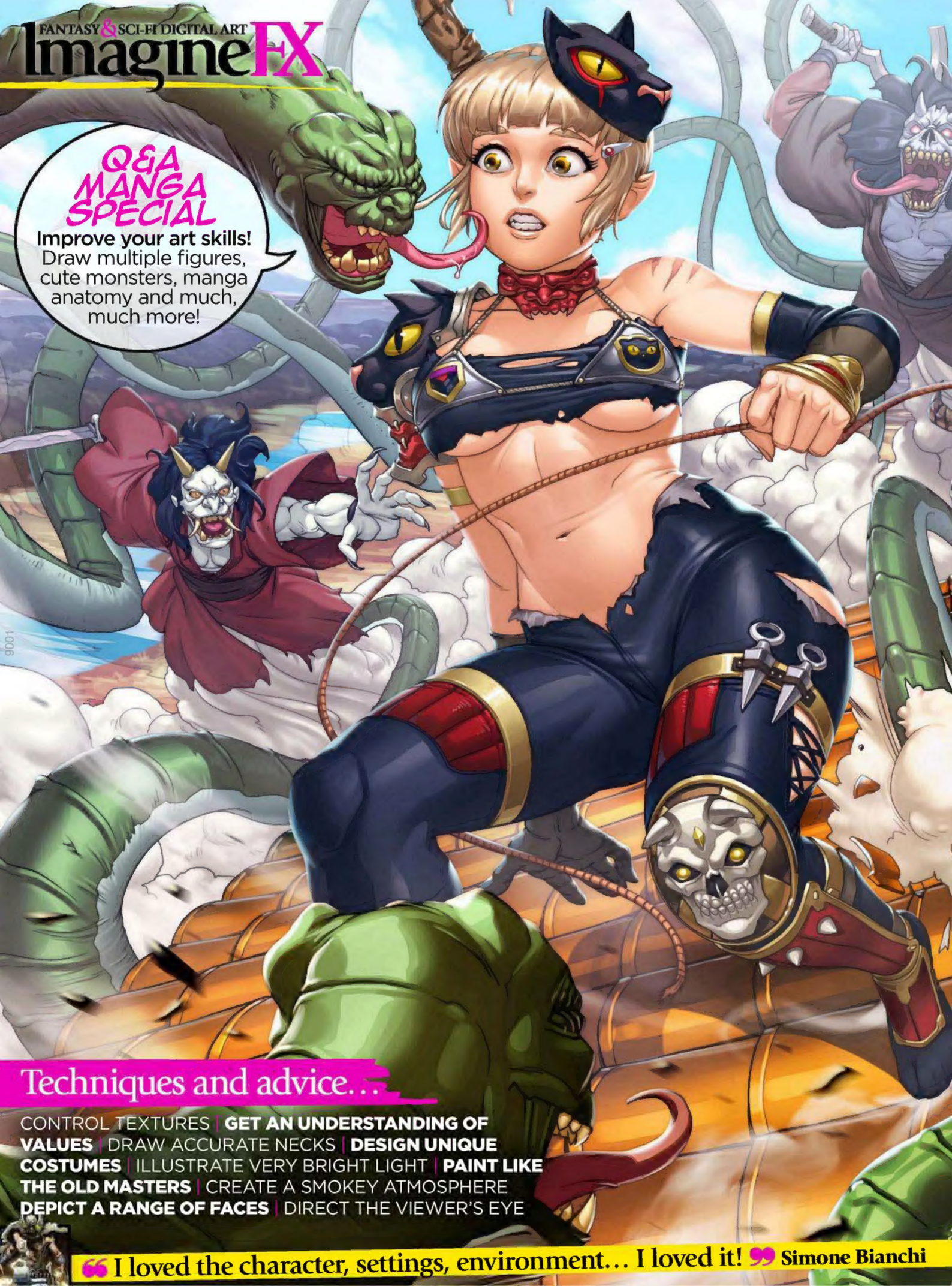




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"I loved the character, settings, environment... I loved it!" **Simone Bianchi**